

Empowering Women entrepreneurs in the MENA Region towards Equal access with men to business and trade markets

Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia



Gender-Sensitive Value Chain in the Agri-Food, Textiles and Clothing and Information and Communication Technology Sectors

EGYPT GSVCA COUNTRY PROFILE

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Abbreviations

AARINENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALCOTEXA	Egyptian Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Alexandria Cotton Exporters Association
API	Application Programming Interfaces
BDC	Business Development Centre
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation initiative
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CNEIDFFE	National Centre for Studies, Information and Documentation on the Family, Women and Childhood
CNFF	National Council for the Family and Women
CR	Community Role
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSR	Corporate and Social Responsibility
DOT	Digital Opportunity trust
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGP	Egyptian Pound
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENOW	Online National Observatory of Women
EOSQC	Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality Control
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FGDs	Focus Groups Discussions
FIARI	Financial Inclusion for the Arab Region Initiative
FRA	Financial Regulatory Authority
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
GA	Gender Analysis
GAFI	General Authority for Investment and Free Zones
GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDP	Gross domestic product)

GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ¹
GFAR	Global Forum on Agricultural Research
GFTA	Grain and Feed Trade Association
GGGR	Global Gender Gap Report
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GIL	Generation of Innovation Leaders Program
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
GN	Gender Needs
GNP	Gross National Product
GSC	Garment Design & Training Services Centre
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
GSVCA	Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis
GVA	Gross Value Added
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICU	Instituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria
IDAL	Investment Development Authority
IDI	Development Index
IDRC	International Development and Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IIT	Institute of Information Technology
IIT	Institute of Information Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
IMEWE	India-Middle East-Western Europe
INSEAD	European Institute of Business Administration
IT	Information Technology
ITES	IT Enabled Services
ITI	Information Technology Institute
ITIDA	Information Technology Industry Development
KFW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LAUA	Association for Urban Agriculture
LTE	Long-Term Evolution
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies
MCIT	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
MDMEDA	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education

¹ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report is the world's largest and longest-running longitudinal study of entrepreneurial activity, originating as a collaborative research project between Babson College, Boston and the London Business School, evolving into a multi-country annual study. Data was collected from 2009 to 2019 with little continuity in this data collection as countries drop in and out of participation in GEM.

MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MF	Mutual Funds
MFW	Microfund for Women
MGF	Mashreq Gender Facility
MIIC	Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoDEE	Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSNFCE	Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and the Status of Women
MWC	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
NAFES	National Fund for Enterprise Support
NBFIs	Non-Banking Financial Institutions
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs
NCHR	National Centre for Human Rights
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NTI	National Telecommunication Institute
OEC	Observatory of the Economic Complexity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBDAC	Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit
PNG	Practical Gender Needs
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PR	Productive Role
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zones
RMF	René Moawad Foundation
SCG	Social Construction of Gender
SDF	Social Development Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SGNs	Strategic Gender Needs
SitAn	Situation Analysis
SOW	Scope of Work
SPG	Strategic planning group
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
STEMS	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
SWOT	Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats
TBSs	Technology Based Start-ups
TC	Textiles and clothing sector
TCLF	Textile Clothing Leather & Footwear
TIEC	Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre's
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN-ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
VAW	Violence Against Women
VC	Value Chain
WBDC	Women Business Development Centre
WBL	Women, Business and the Law
WDI	World Development Indicators
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WGQTC	Weight of the criterion in the total
WGQTC	Weight of the criterion in the total
WHO	World Health Organization
WIE	Women in Engineering
WIT	Women in Technology
WS	Weighted Score
WTO	World Trade Organization's

Introduction

Section I -Context of the Country

1. Socio-demographic data

Egypt has the largest, most densely settled population among the Arab countries with about 104 million.² The total area of the country covers approximately one million square kilometres, but since much of the land is desert, only 7.7% of Egypt's area is inhabited.³ The majority of Egyptians live either in the Nile Delta located in the north of the country or in the narrow Nile Valley south of Cairo. This is because the land near the banks of the Nile is the only arable agricultural land in Egypt. Administratively, Egypt is divided into 27 governorates. The four Urban Governorates (Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez) have no rural population. Each of the other 23 governorates is subdivided into urban and rural areas.

The population is currently growing at a rate of 1.94% which adds approximately 2 million people to the population every year. 51.6% of the Egyptian population are males while 48.4% are females.⁴ Egypt's fertility rate is about 3.3 births per woman, well above the population replacement rate of 2.1 births per woman. The country has a relatively young population, where about 60% of the population is less than 30 years old.⁵



2. Political, Judicial and Economic systems

The Egyptian legal system, considered as a civil law system, is based upon a well-established system of codified laws. It is built on the combination of Islamic (Sharia) law and heritage of Napoleonic Code,⁶ though the Constitution of 2014 refers solely to the principles of Islamic Sharia as being “the principle source of legislation”.⁷ Egypt's Constitution of 2014 stipulates that Egypt is a sovereign, united and indivisible state. It is a Republican democratic system based on citizenship and rule of law. As per Article 6 of the Egyptian 2014 Constitution, “the political system is based on political and

² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/egypt-population>

³ <https://www.unicef.org/egypt/country-background>

⁴ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/egypt-population>

⁴ <https://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Egypt1.html>

⁴ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

⁴ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf / www.capmas.gov.eg/

⁵ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/egypt-population>

⁶ <https://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Egypt1.html>

⁷ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

partisan multiplicity, the peaceful transfer of power, the separation and balance of powers, authority going with responsibility, and respect for human rights and freedoms”.⁸

The President of Egypt is the head of the state, the head of the executive authority and is required to appoint a Prime Minister who forms the government, introduces its programs to the House of Representatives (the principal legislative body), who in turn is in charge of approving the general policy, the general social and economic development plan, the general budget of the state and exercising monitoring and supervision over the performance of the executive authority.⁹

The Egyptian Judiciary is comprised of secular and religious courts, administrative and non-administrative courts, a Supreme Constitutional Court, penal courts, civil and commercial courts, personal status and family courts, national security courts, labour courts, military courts, as well as other specialized courts or circuits.¹⁰ The Supreme Constitutional Court was established in 1970 replacing the Supreme Court established in 1960 and has exclusive jurisdiction to decide questions regarding the constitutionality of laws and regulations, as well as negative and positive conflict of jurisdiction.¹¹

3. Economic indicators

Table 1 - General indicators for Egypt

General Indicators ¹²	Female	Male	Value
GDP, US\$ billions	--	--	361.9
GDP per capita, constant '17 intl. \$ 1000	--	--	12.03
Total population, million people	49.67	50.72	100.39
Population growth rate, %	2.00	1.99	2.00
Population sex ratio (female/male), F/M ratio	49.47	50.53	0.98

Egypt's GDP, the second largest in Africa, was about \$362bn in 2019/20. It is the result of a diversified economy, structured around manufacturing (16%), real estate and construction (17%), wholesale and retail trade (14%), agriculture, forestry & fishing (11%) and mining (10%). The public sector plays a predominant role in the economy, accounting for 31% of activity and 56% of investment (all public sectors). The army is also an important historic economic player, including in the civilian sector.¹³ Moreover, contrary to neighbouring countries, the Egyptian informal sector¹⁴ is very large. It is estimated to represent 50% of total employment, and if included in economic indicators would increase Egypt's GDP by at least 40%,¹⁵ some studies going as far as 50%.¹⁶ It is important to note that the women representation in the sector is very high with approximately half the number of working women who are informally employed.¹⁷

⁸ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

⁹ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

¹⁰ Wahab, M. 2006. An overview of the Egyptian legal system and legal research New York, USA, Hauser Global Law School Program, New York University School of Law, <http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Egypt.htm>

¹¹ <https://egyptjustice.com/supreme-constitutional-court>

¹² These numbers differ slightly from the ones provided above as they have been extracted from a different source, i.e. World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

¹³ https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2017C05_nll.pdf

¹⁴ Informal economy and/or sector, defined in our context as the economic activities, services, and its related jobs and enterprises that are not regulated or protected by the state.

¹⁵ <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays/EG/indicateurs-et-conjoncture>

¹⁶ <https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/egypts-informal-economy-ongoing-cause-unrest>

¹⁷ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/86149155113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

Egypt traditionally benefits from the revenues of a few rents, i.e. remittances from the diaspora (\$22bn/year on average since 2013/14), tourism (that had reached a pre-revolution level of \$12.6bn in 2018/19, before being reduced to \$9.9bn last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic), and royalties from the use of the Suez Canal (\$5.8bn in 2019/20). In addition, hydrocarbon sales (\$11.6bn in 2018/19 were reduced to \$8.5bn in 2019/20, i.e. one third of merchandise exports) despite a renewed energy balance deficit (\$8m symbolic surplus in 2018/19 after five years of deficit, reduced to -\$420m in 2019/20).¹⁸ In terms of employment, agriculture accounts for 40% of employment followed by the textiles and apparel industry which is the second-largest industrial employer in Egypt, employing 15% of Egypt's manufacturing workforce and nearly half of women working in manufacturing. Together, textiles and apparel account for around 3% of Egypt's GDP.¹⁹

Right before the pandemic started closing businesses impacting livelihoods; Egypt's economy was seeing the fruits of a comprehensive economic reform program backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) via a \$12 billion loan in 2016. Three years later, the economy was growing at 5.6% in FY2018/19 but was reduced to 3.6% during FY2019/20, as the COVID-19 crisis caused a year-on-year contraction of 1.7% during April to June (Q4-FY2019/20),²⁰ noting however that at 3.6%, Egypt was the only economy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to record positive growth.²¹ Key sectors, such as tourism, manufacturing, the Suez Canal and oil and gas extractives continue to be severely impacted by restrictions on international travel, the slump in demand, and disruptions to supply chains and trade, both domestically and abroad.

The tourism sector in particular has been greatly impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic setting-back the services exports. Almost coming to a standstill at the beginning of the outbreak, it is now coming back online, with more international flights resuming and tourists from many countries able to visit upon strict conditions.²² Another sector that was particularly impacted by the pandemic was the manufacturing sector that suffered greatly from the lockdown measures. Despite these disruptions of the economic activity due to COVID-19, with an easing of lockdown restrictions Egypt's GDP is still projected to grow by 2.5% in 2021.

This growth can be attributed to the government's response to mitigating the pandemic's short-term fallout. While the initial fiscal stimulus worth 1.8% of GDP was not as large as in other countries, it was dispatched speedily and is being supplemented. The measures included expanding cash transfer social programmes, supporting irregular workers and offering low interest loans for consumer goods. A new guarantee fund for mortgages was set up and tax relief for real estate and subsidised loans were made available to the industry and tourism sectors. Energy costs were lowered for all industrial sectors, partly counteracting the government's subsidy reform programme. The agricultural sector benefited from a tax moratorium. Support for exporters was also stepped up and capital gains taxes were postponed.

Notwithstanding these measures, economists estimate that the country faces rapid population growth, deep and increasing poverty, widespread youth unemployment, and a looming Nile water shortage combined with threats to food security due to climate change. Egypt's growth is

¹⁸ <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays/EG/indicateurs-et-conjoncture>

¹⁹ <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/egypt-market-overview>

²⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview>

²¹ <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/egypt-market-overview>

²² <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/egypt-market-overview>

insufficient to absorb in an inclusive manner the 800,000 young people, both men and women who join the labour market each year and to reduce poverty in a sustainable way. 29.7% of Egyptians are expected to be living below the poverty line in 2019/20 - set at around \$1.7 per day by the authorities - compared with 16.7% twenty years earlier.²³

Gender disparity is key to understanding the situation of youth in the Egyptian labour market. Despite progress achieved on certain fronts, namely education, health and survival, and political empowerment, the economic gap remains unchanged. Most indexes measuring gender inequality confirm Egypt's low ranking with regards to women's economic participation and opportunity whereas the World Bank's 2019 Women Economic Empowerment study²⁴ showed that if female labour participation rate matched that of males', GDP would increase by 34%.²⁵

Section II - Framework of the study/report

The priority of the project *"Empowering Women entrepreneurs in the MENA Region towards Equal access with men to business and trade markets"* is to strengthen women entrepreneurs' capacity to increase their access to and control of resources equally with men entrepreneurs with focus on business and trade markets. Its thematic objective is *"Conducive environment created for women entrepreneurship promotion and integration in business and trade markets"* in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. Creating conducive environment required to produce knowledge on businesswomen and men from a comparative gender analysis perspective that includes SMEs profiling and main actors' mapping of at least three selected sectors, namely agriculture, light industries and services.

Section III - The methodology and tools

1. Approach and desk review

The approach of the project is to invest on improvement of the knowledge on businesswomen and men from a comparative gender analysis perspective. The diagnosis of constraints and challenges intends to determine gender inequalities and gaps and assess capacity and resources needs towards priorities' selection at the level of the SMEs and women entrepreneurs themselves, including during and after the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting consequences. They will be addressed through:

- Assessing/refining the situation analysis of women in business with pertinent and adapted methodology and tools that includes SMEs profiling and actors' mapping including businessmen and women for a comparative gender analysis purpose.
- Conduct stakeholder's assessment and analysis to identify constraints and challenges, determine gender inequalities and gaps and assess capacity and resources needs towards priorities' selection at the level of the SMEs and women entrepreneurs themselves.

²³ <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays/EG/indicateurs-et-conjoncture>

²⁴ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/86149155113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/03/30/gender-equity-seal-a-key-to-strengthening-egypt-s-private-sector>

- Conducting a Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA in a number of SMEs owned/managed by women and men representing a sample from the sectors to be selected to be comparatively analysed and identify main gaps.
- Develop and implement a capacity building strategy and related ways and means to undertake the design, development of the business and related products as well as the process to help women to improve their economic and marketing activities and strengthen their export competitiveness of products and services of enterprises.
- Promote access in trade by building the technical and management capacities of women entrepreneurs and traders including through exchanging experiences, lessons learnt and good practices among them and provision of reasonable facilities and opportunities to realise their full potential.

2. Structure/ Body of the report

Following this introduction, this country profile is organized as follows:

- Chapter One consists of situation analysis and status of Egyptian women in legislation and policy as well as the state of art related to women entrepreneurs in Egypt from Gender and Human Rights as well as Sustainable Development perspectives
- Chapter 2 will cover Gender conceptual and analytical frameworks and the methodology and tools such as the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA as well as the step-by-step process. Limitations and risk assumptions will be assessed. Details will include the planning vs. the reality of the field. It also includes the findings, on the Mapping and the Rapid assessment.
- Chapter 3 will present the full GSVCA conducted in and for Egypt and its results.
- Finally, the Conclusions will wrap up the country profile content and present recommendations.

Chapter I - The State of art: facts, figures and analysis

Despite facing criticism at its launch in 2006, the Global Gender Gap Index has proven over the years to provide a strong basis for robust cross-country and time-series analysis. The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment) and tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time. The Global Gender Gap Index measures scores on a 0 to 100 scale and scores can be interpreted as the distance to parity (i.e. the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed). This year, the Global Gender Gap index benchmarks 156 countries, providing a tool for cross-country comparison and to prioritize the most effective policies needed to close gender gaps.²⁶ Especially since although much progress has been made over the past 50 years, global gender equality had not yet been achieved when crisis struck in 2020.

The latest edition, the 15th edition, the *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*,²⁷ came out a little over one year after COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic. Although the pandemic affected all countries, it did not affect them in the same manner. Preliminary evidence suggests that the health emergency and the related economic downturn have impacted women more severely than men, partially re-opening gaps that had already been closed.

Table 2 - Egypt's Global Gender Gap Index comparative ranking 2006-2021

In 2006, only 10 MENA countries were covered by the GGGR-WEF; Egypt being one of them when it

2006		2021		Progress (2006-2021)	
Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
109	0.579	129	0.639	-20	+0.094

ranked at 109 out of 115 countries. In the latest WEF Gender Gap report, Egypt's global rank is at 129 out of 156 countries, ranking third amongst the MENA countries, after the United Arab Emirates (72nd on the global ranking) and Tunisia (126th). The country improved its ranking since it has closed 63.9% of its overall gender gap by 5 positions, confirming the upward trend observed in the previous edition.

Section I - Gender Equality in Egypt: facts & figures

1. Educational attainment

1.1. The Education system and indicators

The education system in Egypt is categorised as pre-university (pre-primary, primary, and secondary) education and university (higher) education. Pre-university education consists of kindergarten for two years, primary school for six years, a preparatory school for three years, and high school for three years (a portion of technical high school for five years). Compulsory education comprises a

²⁶ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023/digest>

²⁷ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/ab6795a1-960c-42b2-b3d5-587eccda6023/in-full>

total of nine years of primary and preparatory school. With regard to non-formal education, there are also community schools for out-of-school children who never be enrolled or who have dropped out from school. Pre-university and non-formal education is governed by the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE), and higher education is governed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR). There is also Al-Azhar education (pre-primary, primary, secondary, and Azhar University), which is governed by the Supreme Council of Al-Azhar.²⁸

Table 3 – Egypt’s Educational attainment comparative ranking 2006-2021²⁹

Area	2006		2021		
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Avg
Educational attainment	90	0.903	105	0.973	0.950

Egypt has the largest education system in the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA) with 20 million students in pre-tertiary education and in comparison to the same countries, access to education in Egypt is high. Egypt has achieved close to universal access to primary education (99% net enrolment rate). The net enrolment rates for lower and upper secondary education are 94% and 77%, respectively. Egypt ranks first in the world for the indicators on enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education. There is gender parity at primary and nearly so at secondary levels with actually more girls than boys being enrolled. Additionally, the dropout rate is low at both the primary stage (0.8 percent) and the lower secondary (4.9 %).³⁰

Table 4 - Egypt's 2021 educational attainment³¹

Area	Rank	Score	Avg	Female	Male	Ratio
Literacy rate, %	125	0.856	0.897	65.5	76.5	0.86
Enrolment in primary education, %	1	1.000	0.755	98.8	98.3	1.00
Enrolment in secondary education %	1	1.000	0.950	83.1	82.5	1.01
Enrolment in tertiary education, %	1	1.000	0.927	35.8	34.6	1.03

In tertiary education, girls represent 54% of universities students, and 45.2% of Masters’ students.³² 49.3% of students enrolled in PHD programs are women, although a significant gender disparity is not observed in the enrolment, the proportion of female and male students significantly differs according to the majors and subject matter chosen.³³ In 2018, the percentage of women professors in universities was 48.6%.³⁴

The system has been criticized for not delivering the necessary learning outcomes, Egypt’s results on the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) showed an average reading score of 330 for grade 4 students, below the “low” international benchmark.³⁵ Literacy rates are in line with these outcomes as the national statistics of education reveal that the percentage of illiteracy in

²⁸ <https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12305181.pdf>

²⁹ [World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021)

³⁰ Primary stage comprises grades 1–6; preparatory stage comprises grades 7–9

³¹ [World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021)

³² <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/94860/Egypt-s-CAPMAS-releases-2019-fact-book-on-undergraduate-graduate>

³³ <https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12305181.pdf>

³⁴ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

³⁵ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/346091522415590465/pdf/PAD-03272018.pdf>

2017, among females was at 30.8% compared to 21.2% among males.³⁶ Unsurprisingly, the school dropout rates are higher for women than men for the age group between 6-20 years old. In 2017, it was 52.4% for women and 46.6% for men. In addition, educational outcomes are impacted differently on the territory with geographical disparities that can be noted since more than 50% of pupils in community schools which are for the children who dropped out or never go to school are girls in Upper Egypt.³⁷ These geographical disparities are unlikely to disappear. On the contrary, one can expect for these gaps and variations in quality across income, geography, race, and ethnicity to widen, especially since the future implications of disruptions due to the pandemic have not been unwrapped.

1.2. Education Policies

A number of policies were enacted in the country to address the various issues in education, such as the “Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education 2014–2030”³⁸ was formulated by the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) for pre-university education. The problems and issues identified in the plan are as follows:

- Dropout, failure, absenteeism, and cheating problems in basic education
- Absence of school activities as an important element of the process of learning
- Disconnection between education output and society’s needs
- Incompetent handling of the poorest areas and the new expected roles for education
- Low educational productivity and efficiency
- Little attention devoted to a sense of citizenship and the other important issues
- Deficiency in school performance and discipline.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sustainable Development Strategy (Egypt’s Vision 2030)³⁹ entails a strategic vision, which is to provide a high-quality education and training system for all, without discrimination; provide the necessary skills to students and trainees to help them think creatively and empower them technically and technologically; and contribute to the development of proud, creative, responsible and competitive citizens who accept diversity and differences, are proud of their country’s history, and are eager to build its future and can complete with regional and international entities.

Moreover, Article 3 of Law No. 139 of 1981 for education stipulates that pre-university education is a right for all citizens in state schools free of charge or fees for educational or educational services. Similarly, Article 15 stipulated that basic education is a right for all Egyptian children who are six years old and the state is committed to providing it, and the parent or parents are obliged to implement it for a period of nine years. The establishment of 1331 of what is considered as ‘Girl Friendly Schools’ and ‘Society Schools’ in 2012, aiming to give a real opportunity to girls from poor families and dropouts aged from 6-14 to catch up with their education. These girls often drop out due to the lack of a nearby governmental school, as well as their local customs and traditions that do not allow for girls to go unaccompanied for long distances.

³⁶ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

³⁷ <https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12305181.pdf>

³⁸ https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/egypt_strategic_plan_pre-university_education_2014-2030_eng_0.pdf

³⁹ <https://www.arabdevelopmentportal.com/publication/sustainable-development-strategy-sds-egypt-vision-2030>

The CAWTAR Gender and Trade Country Profile for Egypt⁴⁰ mentioned that there are continuous efforts are made by the General Authority for literacy and Adult Education together with the National Council for Women for additional training and development programmes to teach rural women new skills that would economically enable them and encourage them to attend literacy classes. Further development and expansion of literacy programs are constantly being introduced, allowing more females in rural areas who had missed the opportunity of education, to engage in such classes.

According to the same report, the literacy Act pertaining to establishing the literacy Institute has been amended to allow for more autonomy and decentralization in its decisions, planning, and implementation, through enabling Governors and local administrations to plan and set literacy schemes that consider the social and economic dimensions of each province. It is important to note that the Minister of Education has issued a decree on the 19th of October 2018 that exempts female heads of households, divorced women and widows from the fees of public, language experiential and language schools. In 2020, female heads of households were estimated at 18%.⁴¹

Egypt has adopted a comprehensive plan to face the consequences of the pandemic, in order to reduce its impact on citizens and on the country’s various sectors and entities. Regarding the education system, studying at universities and schools was suspended, for two weeks, starting on Sunday, March 15, 2020. This suspension was extended until October 16, 2020, as part of the country's comprehensive plan to deal with the repercussions of the Coronavirus and impacted over 20 million students. The new academic year 2020-2021 commenced on October 17, 2020.⁴²

The Ministry of Education⁴³ decided that final exams for primary and preparatory school students in the State education system will be cancelled and Higher Education exams. Moreover, schools, public and private universities moved to e-learning (recorded lectures, live lectures on different platforms) to guarantee the smoothness of the semester. The higher education system benefited from the fact that there is a large percentage of universities and students dealing with e-learning methods prior to the pandemic which facilitated the continuation of the educational process in most Egyptian universities.

2. Economic participation & opportunity/EPO

Table 5 – Egypt’s Economic participation and opportunity comparative ranking 2006-2021⁴⁴

Area	2006		2021		Progress (2006-2021)	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Economic participation & opportunity	108	0.416	146	0.421	-38	+0.005

Research findings reveal that Egypt has a number of laws and regulations that promote gender equality and support women’s participation in the labour force; however, in spite of efforts made by

⁴⁰ [Gender and trade Egypt report / CAWTAR](http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El)

⁴¹ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

⁴² <https://euromed-economists.org/download/how-did-covid-19-pandemic-impact-education-in-egypt/?wpdmdl=11061&refresh=614fff681f73f1632632680>

⁴³ <http://portal.mohe.gov.eg/ar-eg/MediaCenter/Pages/news.aspx>

⁴⁴ [World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021)

the government in terms of legislation, women’s level of participation in both the labour force and employment is very low.

Low levels of women’s labour force participation are an important driver of lack of economic participation. In MENA, the Gender gap reports the region’s average participation rate to be 31%. Seven of the MENA countries namely, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, have 20% or less of women participating in the labour market, the lowest rates in the world.

The rate of Female Labour Force⁴⁵ Participation rate in Egypt is 18.46%⁴⁶ vs. that of men with 71.17%, over 3.5 times higher. For comparison, the world average Female Labour Force Participation rate in 2019 based on 181 countries is 51.96%. The other side to this statistic is the global unemployment rate of Egypt that is at 7.3% for the second quarter of 2021. Full year 2019 unemployment rate for females was 21.33%, three times higher than that of male unemployment rate at 6.73%.⁴⁷ As detailed above, Egypt is the MENA country with the lowest male unemployment rate and the highest female unemployment rate, and hence has the largest gender gap of the MENA countries with over 15 percentage point difference. Comparatively, Morocco, the gap is relatively narrow, standing at 2 percentage points.⁴⁸

These statistics drawn from the World Bank, although varying slightly from the ones presented from the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, draw the same picture of an extremely large gender gap when it comes to women’s economic participation & opportunity. For women in Egypt and young women in particular—the labor force participation rate has remained persistently low and unemployment has remained high. In addition, a large share of young women is not in employment, education, or training.⁴⁹

Table 6 - Egypt's 2021 Economic participation & opportunity

Area	Rank	Score	Avg	Female	Male	f/m
Labour force participation rate, %	150	0.266	0.655	20.0	75.2	0.27
Wage equality for similar work, 1-7 (best)	10	0.795	0.628	-	-	5.57
Estimated earned income, int'l \$ 1,000	147	0.221	0.494	4.1	18.8	0.22
Legislators, senior officials and managers, %	148	0.079	0.349	7.4	92.7	0.08
Professional and technical workers, %	127	0.502	0.755	33.4	66.6	0.50

Noting that both men and women in Egypt tend to prefer public-sector jobs, the share of employment in Egypt’s public sector has declined over the past ten years, down to about one-fourth of the share of total employment without being offset with an expansion of opportunities in the formal private sector, which has experienced low growth. One in every two female employees is employed in the public sector, while one in every five male employees is employed in the public

⁴⁵ % of female population ages 15+

⁴⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>

⁴⁷ https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Egypt/Female_unemployment/

⁴⁸ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ac780735-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/ac780735-en>

⁴⁹ https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2868.html

sector.⁵⁰ There has been much more substantial growth in irregular or seasonal work, and World Bank data suggests substantial growth in the share of women in informal employment, increasing from around 20% of total women in nonagricultural employment in 2008 to 41% in 2017.⁵¹ Women account for only 17% of private sector employees versus 83% for males and 31% of public sector compared to 69% for males. In governmental agencies the gender distribution is 44.5% of women working these agencies.

On average, less than 18% of managers in the MENA region are women; and in some countries, women represent less than 10%, including in Syria (8.9%), Algeria (8.4%), Egypt (7.4%), Saudi Arabia (6.8%) and Yemen (4.1%). Only in Jordan are there at least as many women managers as men. In terms of financial inclusion, the percentage of women holding bank accounts has increased from 9% in 2015 to 27% in 2017. With regards to access to financial market, 51% of women benefited from the microfinance loans with less than 1% rate of women defaulting on loans, while 69% of women benefited from small enterprise loans (2018).⁵²

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the share of those in employment that fell by 8% (-9% in urban areas and -7% in rural areas). The fall in the employment rate was sharper among females (-10%, and -8% among men).⁵³

3. Women political empowerment and participation

In the March 2021 edition of the Global Gender Gap Report, 96 countries reduced gender gaps in parliament. The most-improved is the United Arab Emirates that went from 22.5% of women parliamentarians to 50% and Egypt that increased from 14.9% to 27.4%.

Table 7 – Egypt’s Political Empowerment comparative ranking 2006-2021⁵⁴

Area	2006		2021		
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Avg
Political empowerment	111	0.022	78	0.196	0.218

The percentage of Women in the Egyptian Parliament had increased from 2% in 2013 to 15% in 2018 which was at the time the highest ever women representation in the Parliament since women were first given the right to be elected in 1957. Pushing the agenda of equality further, in 2019 constitutional amendments mandated a quota for women requiring that 25% of all seats of the parliament be reserved for women.

Table 8 – Women’s political empowerment and participation⁵⁵

Area	Rank	Score	Avg	Female	Male	f/m
Women in parliament, %	59	0.377	0.312	27.4	72.6	0.38
Women in ministerial positions %	68	0.319	0.235	24.2	75.8	0.32
Years with female/male head of state (last 50)	76	0.000	0.144	0	50.00	0

50 <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/861491551113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

51 https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2868.html

52 <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

53 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/---sro-cairo/documents/publication/wcms_791076.pdf

54 World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021

55 World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2021

Other achievements that have are worth noting are:

- Percentage of women Ministers in the Cabinet has increased from 6% in 2015 to 20% in 2017 to 25% in 2018 (Highest Ever representation of women in the Cabinet);
- Percentage of women holding Deputy Minister has increased from 17% in 2017 to 27% in 2018;
- Percentage of women holding deputy Governors reached 31% in 2019;
- Percentage of women in upcoming local councils is 25% according to the constitution (Highest Ever Quota for women in local council 25%);
- Percentage of women on boards in Egyptian exchange stock 10.1% & banking sector 14.8% & public enterprise sector & Financial Regulatory Authority (FRA) 11%;
- The % of women leaders in executive positions is 7.1%, which is higher than the average in the MENA region estimated at 5.4%.;
- Percentage of women Editors in Chief of National magazines is 18%;
- Women were appointed as managers in 5 administrative prosecution offices, one of which is placed in Upper Egypt (for the first time in Egypt).⁵⁶

4. Women in the Egyptian entrepreneurship world

Despite the various efforts, women are disproportionately represented in the workforce and the business arena. As a consequence, entrepreneurship is very low amongst MENA women as the region exhibits the widest gender gap globally in terms of early-stage entrepreneurial activity. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) MENA Report 2017,⁵⁷ women in the region are only half as likely as men to be engaged in total early-stage entrepreneurial activity.⁵⁸ In contrast eight women were engaged in TEA for every ten male entrepreneurs in Africa and Latin America & the Caribbean.

In the past few years, Egypt's percentage of women entrepreneurs has been the lowest in the Middle East North Africa region and Sub-Saharan Africa countries. Women in early stage entrepreneurial activities in Egypt were 2% in 2012, while this ratio reached 4% in the MENA region and 27% in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2014, women business owners (including the self-employed) reached 613,100, accounting for about 9% of the total number of self-employed/business owners in Egypt – male business owners at six million. While women owners are concentrated in rural areas (82%), with 18% located in urban areas, in contrast 62% of male business owners are in rural areas and 38% in urban areas.⁵⁹ The latest data shared by the Egyptian authorities estimates the percentage of women owning private companies to be 16%.⁶⁰

The GEM report estimates that 20.9% of the adult male population in Egypt in 2016 was engaged in early-stage entrepreneurial activity and 7.5% of adult female population was engaged in early-stage entrepreneurial activity generating a Female to male ratio of 0.36.

⁵⁶ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

⁵⁷ <https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/gem-2017-middle-east-and-north-africa-report>

⁵⁸ Noting the limited data and even contradictory data available of women entrepreneurs in MENA

⁵⁹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_551168.pdf

⁶⁰ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Pdf/446/Factsheet-of-Women-s-Empowerment-Ever%C2%A0Since-President-Abdel-Fattah-El>

Although Egypt has been lagging behind in terms of women entrepreneurship, it is far from being the only country in this situation. In an aim to unleash economic potential of women’s enterprises that the International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed its Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED) strategy launched in 2008, under which a research tool was developed: The Women’s Entrepreneurship Development Assessment (WED Assessment) that have been implemented over the past decade in many countries with Egypt being the 29th country to conduct a WED assessment in 2016.

The main goal of the assessment is to identify the major deficiencies in the six framework conditions affecting the emergence of women entrepreneurs and the ability of existing women-owned enterprises (WOEs) to access the necessary resources and support for sustainability and growth on an equal opportunity basis. The outcome of the assessment is a series of concrete recommendations aiming to form the basis for policy and programme actions designed to address these deficiencies and develop the potential of women’s entrepreneurship in Egypt.

In 2016, a Women’s Entrepreneurship Development (WED) Assessment was conducted for Egypt. The framework of the assessment examined six conditions:⁶¹

- 1) Gender-sensitive legal and regulatory systems that advance women’s economic empowerment
- 2) Effective policy leadership and coordination for the promotion of WED
- 3) Access to gender-sensitive financial services
- 4) Access to gender-sensitive business development support (BDS) services
- 5) Access to market and technology
- 6) Representation of women entrepreneurs and participation in policy dialogue

Table 9 - Egypt WED assessment 2016⁶²

Condition	Sub-condition	Score
1. Gender-sensitive legal and regulatory systems that advance women’s economic empowerment	Equality of labour market access	3
	Labour laws and regulations	2
	Business registration and licensing regulations and procedures	3
	Property and inheritance rights	3
2. Effective policy leadership and coordination for the promotion of WED	WED as a national priority policy	2
	Presence of government focal point for promotion and coordination of WED and support actions	2
3. Access to gender-sensitive financial services	Women entrepreneurs’ participation in generic financing programs	2
	Financing programs specifically targeted to women-owned enterprises	3
4. Access to gender-sensitive business development support (BDS)	Women’s access to mainstream BDS services	5
	Mainstream BDS services respond to the need of women entrepreneurs	2

61 Cited in the document as Stevenson, L and St-Onge, A.2013. OP.cit, p.20.

62 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_551168.pdf

	Presence of women-focused BDS services	3
5. Access to markets and technology	Export promotion for women entrepreneurs	2
	Government procurement programs actively targeting women's enterprises	1
	Supply-chain and linkages that integrate women-owned enterprises	3
	ICTs and technology access of women entrepreneurs	2
6. Representation of women entrepreneurs and participation in policy dialogue	Representation and "voice" of women in business/ sector membership associations	1
	Participation of women entrepreneurs	4
	Participation of women entrepreneurs	2

Eighteen sub-conditions reflecting the six conditions are assessed on a score from 1 to 5 where 5 is the highest. The results of the assessment show that only two conditions obtained a score of 5 or 4, namely, women's access to mainstream business development support services, and presence of women entrepreneurs' associations and networks. When averaging sub-conditions within each of the six conditions, the results show that "effective policy leadership and coordination for the promotion of WED" and "access to market and technology" averaged a score of 2. Conditions 1, 3 and 6 averaged a score between 2.30 and 2.75 and condition 4 averaged a score of 3.3.

According to the assessment's Women Entrepreneurs Survey (WES), the majority of women entrepreneurs in Egypt are motivated by the necessity to have income rather than the opportunity to start their own business. Findings in Egypt highlighted the lack of information on women's participation in export activities, trade fairs and government procurement programmes, the fact that efforts to promote exports of Women-owned enterprises/WOEs are very limited and government procurement programmes targeting women entrepreneurs, non-existent. There are limited supply chain programmes targeting women entrepreneurs in Egypt noting that more recently, there have been several value chain initiatives targeted to women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Women entrepreneurs represent less than 5% of the members in major business associations. This general lack of representation hinders women's voice in the policy dialogue process with government. There are a number of women business associations existing in both urban and rural regions; however, they play a moderate role in supporting women entrepreneurs in Egypt. These associations quite often need both financial and non-financial support required to strengthen their management and advocacy capacity, increase member benefits, and broaden their outreach.

Aiming to mitigate this concern, the first Women Entrepreneurs Network was launched on November 18, 2018 in cooperation with the National Council for Women, Federation of Egyptian Industries, Alexandria Business Women Association, Business Women of Egypt 21, Entreprenelle, Etijah, Flat6Labs, and Nile University. The ambition is to have a platform for women entrepreneurs, associations, service providers, and other stakeholders to ensure that more women across Egypt receive services essential to their entrepreneurial success.

5. Gender-based violence and sexual harassment

Violence against women (VAW) is widespread and takes many forms, all of which are detrimental to women's physical and psychological health. Violence against women and girls constitutes an

extreme expression of the unequal power relations between men and women, and it hampers their ability to engage in social, economic or political activities.

One explanation for low level of female labour force participation is linked to mobility and the level of sexual harassment in public transports as well as in the workplace. Transportation and harassment in transportation is one of the obstacles mentioned by employed women. Traffic, overcrowding, harassment and being robbed, as well as the cost incurred to go to work, are main problems women consider as hindrances to their participation in the labor force. However, employed respondents claimed that as a result of their work, they had gained self-confidence and become braver in dealing with harassment in transportation. More educated and younger women stated that they usually reply to harassers by insulting or beating them, and in certain cases they report them to police.

The huge economic costs of VAW, estimated at EGP 2.17 billion yearly, were confirmed by the Egypt Gender based Cost of Violence Survey (EGBVS). Sexual harassment on public transport and at work is significant and was reported to have increased since 2011.

With poor public transport services and the high cost of taxis and private cars, women from poor and rural areas have no choice but to use private minibuses and the 'Tuk Tuk'. A study by UN Women indicated that 81.8% of women interviewed in Cairo said they were frequently harassed on public transport. The highest rate of harassment was reported in densely populated urban governorates, such as Cairo and Alexandria, and less in border governorates. As many as 93.4% of the victims did not request help from the security forces at the time of harassment because of fear of being shamed or because they did not believe the police would help them.⁶³

The percentage of women who have experienced sexual harassment in public places varies widely across the Arab countries. Arab Barometer wave V (2018- 2019) data reveal that sexual harassment is a gendered problem. In all countries participating in the survey, 39% of the surveyed women (against 22 percent of men) reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment in public places. In Egypt, 62% percent of the surveyed women have experienced sexual harassment.⁶⁴ Compared to its neighbouring countries, Egypt ranks first in terms of Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, for Females. The score is at 90% for ages 17-18-year-old and for the age group 29-40 it is at 85%.

The Arab Barometer wave V data (2018-2019) highlights that close to half of women in a national household-based survey of around 3,000 women ages 18 to 64 reported encountering problems in the workplace. The most frequently cited problem among that share of women was sexual harassment. This issue was most commonly cited for younger women and those working in urban areas. Another study that employed purposive sampling techniques to interview women in both public areas and places of work found that virtually all respondents reported encountering some form of sexual harassment at some point.

Due to the magnitude of the problem, families who can afford to forego the income of women might prevent them from work altogether. In other cases, women's mobility is constrained by having to

⁶³ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/86149155113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

⁶⁴ <https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Sexual-Harassment-Domestic-Violence-Arab-Citizens-Public-Opinion-2019.pdf>

rely on brothers or sons to accompany them during night commutes or when travelling from one city to another, hindering severely women’s economic opportunities.⁶⁵

Section II - Women Legal Status and Rights in Egypt

1. The Legal status and rights impacting on public and private life⁶⁶

- *The principles of non-discrimination and equality*

Already in its preamble, the drafters of the Egyptian constitution of 2014, amended in 2019, set out very clearly its fundamental principles:” We are drafting a Constitution that holds all of us equal in rights and duties without discrimination of any kind. We the citizens, women and men, the Egyptian people, sovereigns in a sovereign homeland, this is the manifestation of our volition; this is the Constitution of our revolution (...). The principles of equality, justice and equal opportunities among all citizens are reiterated in Article 4 and in others that follow. The Article 9 defines the duties of the State in terms of ensuring “equal opportunities for all citizens without discrimination”. According to the article 11 “The State shall guarantee the realization of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (...)”. Moreover, all citizens are equal before the Law. They are equal in rights, freedoms and general duties, without discrimination based on religion, belief, sex, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographic affiliation or any other reason. Discrimination and incitement of hatred is a crime punished by Law. The State shall take necessary measures for eliminating all forms of discrimination, and the Law shall regulate creating an independent commission for this purpose (Art. 53).⁶⁷

With the exception of laws regulating the rights and duties of men and women within the family, the Egyptian national legislation, in broad terms and specific areas, is consistent with the fundamental equality principles of the Constitution. However, if we refer to the above cited development indicators and the gender gap in social, economic and political terms, it is clear that women are not yet entitled to and enjoying their full constitutional, legal and human rights.

- *The political rights*

According to the 2014 Constitution, reviewed in 2019 and its article 11, “(...). The State shall endeavour to take necessary measures to ensure that women are duly represented in Parliament in accordance with the law. It also guarantees women the right to hold public and managerial positions in the State and to be appointed to authorities and judicial bodies, without discrimination against them (...)”⁶⁸ Without specifying men or women, for the Constitution (Art. 74 and 75), all citizens have the right to form political parties and non-governmental associations and foundations on a democratic basis and in accordance with the law.

Constitutional Amendments of 2019 improved women political participation by amending Article 102 of the Constitution regarding allocating 25% of seats in Parliament to women: “The House of Representatives shall consist of not less than four hundred and fifty members, elected by direct

⁶⁵ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/861491551113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

⁶⁶ See more at <http://www.arabwomenlegal-emap.org/Pages/CountryProfile.aspx?country=الجزائر>

⁶⁷ <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

⁶⁸ <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

universal suffrage and by secret ballot, provided that at least one quarter of the total number of seats shall be allocated to women (...)"'. In this article, the Constitution stipulates that while defining all the conditions of the electoral system, candidacies or administrative division, the law shall ensure the equitable representation of the population and the governorates. Article 180 sets out the criteria for direct and secret ballot elections to the local council in terms of electoral mandate (4 years), age (at least twenty-one (21) years) and all matters relating to candidacy and election procedures with the condition that a quota of 25% of the seats be allocated to young people under 35 years of age on the one hand and 25% for women on the other. The principles of diversity and inclusion are also pre-requisites of this article. It stipulates that workers and farmers should be represented by no less than 50% of the total number of seats and clearly states that Christians and people with disabilities should be included in an appropriate manner in these percentages.⁶⁹

The main laws governing presidential and parliamentary elections have been drafted and/or amended to be consistent with the fundamental principles of the Constitution. For presidential elections, these are the National Elections Authority (NEA) Act No. 198 of 2017, the Exercise of Political Rights Act No. 45 of 2014 and the Presidential Elections Act No. 22 of 2014, in addition to the decrees issued by the newly created NEA specific to the 2018 election.⁷⁰ In June 2020, MPs approved amendments to three laws: Law 46/2014, regulating the composition of the House of Representative; Law 45/2014 on the exercise of political rights, and Law 198/2017 regulating the performance of the National Election Committee (NEC) as well as a new law regulating the composition of a second chamber — the Senate. The amendments to the House law states that the number of elected MPs be increased to 568, instead of 540, in line with Article 102 of Egypt's 2019 amended constitution. Article 3 states half this number will be elected via the individual candidacy system, and half through the closed list system. An additional 28 MPs will be appointed by the president, and 25 per cent of the total number of House seats (125) is reserved for women.⁷¹ Egyptian women have never been as visible in public and political institutions, whether in the legislature or the executive, as they are today.

- *Personal and family rights*

While the 2014 constitution and its amendment in 2019 or the various positive laws whether newly drafted or revised in the spirit of the principles of non-discrimination and equality between men and women, it must be acknowledged that this is far from being the case for the law governing the rights and duties of men and women within the family. Indeed, despite the significant and recognised progress in the field of the rights and situation of Egyptian women, particularly in public life, discriminatory legal provisions remain underpinned by biased local practices and traditions that undermine the status of women in Egypt in private, societal and family life.

On 20 January 2021, the Egyptian Council of Ministers gave final approval to its draft law for a new personal status law. The draft law was forwarded on 15 February to the Speaker of Parliament, who in turn forwarded it to the relevant committees for study (Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, Social Solidarity Committee and Religious Affairs and Endowments Committee). The law comprises 194 articles governing marriage and its dissolution, divided into seven chapters. This draft law, which represents a real social project in a historical period of change of the contemporary

⁶⁹ <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

⁷⁰ <https://timep.org/pulling-back-the-curtain/fact-sheets/election-laws-and-procedures/>

⁷¹ <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/50/1201/372320/AlAhram-Weekly/Egypt/Egypt-parliamentary-election-laws-passed.aspx>

Egypt, has not been subjected to any social debate, even contradictory. Under Article 122 of the Constitution, the government is supposed to submit bills to Parliament for debate, amendment and vote, but this does not mean that they have to be kept secret. Because of this and the content of some of the provisions of the law, which was not supposed to be confidential, the bill faced strong opposition. For many, these "did not improve the situation and did not meet the demands of fathers and mothers; on the contrary, the amendments made the situation worse".⁷²

Without trying to comment or analyse their explanatory memorandum, the Bill's main aspects and related issues⁷³ are the following: *the right to marriage without a wali and the right of the wali to annul it, the polygyny,*⁷⁴ *the verbal divorce, the paternal abduction and the family court jurisdiction over movable marital assets.*

According to its article 6, the bill confirms the right of a woman to enter into marriage on her own and without a wali⁷⁵ from the age of 18. However, this right is quickly emptied of its substance as it states, in the paragraph B of the same article (6), since "the wali has the right to marry without a wali", the wali has the right to legally request the dissolution of the marriage before consummation within one year from the date of learning about it or the date it was contracted, whichever is earlier, if the woman marries an unworthy/unfit⁷⁶ person or without a dowry equal to her status,⁷⁷ provided that she is not pregnant and has not given birth. Without extrapolating from the wali's capacity in deciding the unworthiness of the husband or who will benefit from the dowry, it is worth recalling that once again this provision is in contradiction with the constitution, to quote only article 11.

The bill incorporates article 11 bis of the current law, which states that "the husband must acknowledge his marital status in the marriage certificate" and thus explicitly confirms the right of a man to marry four women. Failure to do so can result in a penalty of one year's imprisonment and a fine of between EGP 20,000 and EGP 50,000 [USD 1,280 and USD 3,190]" for the violation of this article. Thus, if the man has to declare his remarriage(s), for the law -as well as for religious institutions- this is in no way a prejudice that the first wife can use as a ground for divorce for fault.⁷⁸

Article 46 upholds verbal divorce, which is one of the most important problems affecting Egyptian women and a real headache on an individual, legal and social level. Indeed, a man can unilaterally divorce a woman verbally, often in private and sometimes by telephone, and then postpone and refuse the divorce before the officiating officer or the judicial authorities, which places the woman in a rather critical legal, religious and social situation: she is divorced in the eyes of the religious institutions but still married in the name of the law, which recognises the proof of the divorce only in the form of a testimony, a written document or an acknowledgement by the husband. It should be noted that in 2006, the Supreme Constitutional Court ruled this provision unconstitutional.⁷⁹ On this basis, women have been given the right to prove verbal divorce by any means of evidence provided

⁷²Mostafa Mahmoud Egypt's Personal Status Bill: Appeasing al-Azhar? 2021-09-20 <https://english.legal-agenda.com/egypts-personal-status-bill-appeasing-al-azhar/>

⁷³Mostafa Mahmoud Egypt's Personal Status Bill: Appeasing al-Azhar? 2021-09-20 <https://english.legal-agenda.com/egypts-personal-status-bill-appeasing-al-azhar/>

⁷⁴ Polygyny is the most common and accepted form of polygamy, entailing the marriage of a man with several women.

⁷⁵ Pl. awliya Male guardian, e.g. her father or brother

⁷⁷ Mahr al-mithl

⁷⁸ Talaq li-l-dar

⁷⁹ Claim no. 113 of Constitutional Judicial Year 26

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for by law. This provision also totally contradicts the Article 11 of the 2014 Constitution amended in 2019.

The personal status bill, which was approved by the cabinet in January 2020, would also give fathers priority in child custody - reversing the current law which favours mothers - and allow fathers to prevent mothers travelling with their children. Indeed, the repositioning paternal custody in the list of people entitled to child custody and introduces a father's right to host his children. Article 89 establishes the following order of precedence: the mother, the maternal grandmother, the paternal grandmother, and then the father. It thereby advances the father from the sixteenth position to the fourth position in one go. Article 91 of the bill establishes, for the first time, grandparents' right to visitation when the parents are in the picture which was not the case of the article 20 of the previous law. While the bill deals with the father's right of custody, it does not address the issue of paternal abduction, for which it offers an inadequate remedy. Indeed, the abduction of the child by the father is considered a "failure to surrender the child" rather than a crime and a penalty of no more than one year's imprisonment increases the punishment for the crime, reflecting a certain form of leniency contrary to Article 289 of the Penal Code which states that "anyone who abducts a child without guile or coercion shall be punished by at least ten years' imprisonment".

The squandering of marital property/assets is one of the main disputes that spouses file against each other both during marriage and in the event of divorce. To solve this problem, the bill proposes that "the movable property of the marital home shall be the private property of the wife, unless otherwise agreed, and that the family court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all disputes concerning it". Thus, claims for dissipation of marital movable property fall within the jurisdiction of the civil courts and not the criminal courts, as is currently the case. This represents a weakening of women's rights and their disempowerment. In fact, these claims are one of the main sources of strength for women and for the preservation of the gender power balance in family law cases. Indeed, due to the potential dangers of custodial sentences and the social and legal effect of their entry on their criminal record, many men are forced to reach consensual agreements on all matters in dispute before the courts to only quote child support, alimony and education costs. Therefore, the transfer of these cases to the jurisdiction of the civil courts will make it even more difficult to protect the rights of women and children in the family. No more pressure, no more danger and no more movable marital property, the effective collection of which was already difficult even under Article 341 of the Criminal Code.⁸⁰

The bill has been reviewed by a committee for constitutional and legislative affairs and currently discussed in the before it is taken to parliament.

- *The principle of integrity and security*

The Egyptian Constitution is among the very few constitutions in the region that clearly address the issue of violence against women as clearly stated in its article 11 "(...) The State has an obligation to protect women from all forms of violence and to ensure that they are able to reconcile their family obligations with their professional requirements. It also undertakes to provide maternity and child care and protection, family support, the elderly and women in greatest need".⁸¹ Other articles

⁸⁰ Mostafa Mahmoud Egypt's Personal Status Bill: Appeasing al-Azhar? 2021-09-20 <https://english.legal-agenda.com/egypts-personal-status-bill-appeasing-al-azhar/>

⁸¹ <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

preconize protection of all citizens without specifying men or women such as the article 59 “Everyone has the right to a safe life. The State shall provide security and reassurance for its citizens and all those residing in its territory” and the article 60 “The human body is inviolable and any assault, deformation or mutilation committed against it shall be a crime punishable by Law. Organs trade shall be prohibited, and it is not permissible to perform any medical or scientific experiment thereon without a certified free consent according to established principles in medical sciences and as regulated by Law”.

Egypt has also put in place a legal framework for the protection of women so that they are not exposed to violence, and as far as possible in line with international conventions that guarantee women's right to be free from gender-based discrimination and violence.

Key achievements in this area include amendments to the Penal Code in 2011, which provide for a separate section for the crimes of indecent assault and corruption of morals, to provide for harsher penalties for women and girls who are victims of these crimes. The penalty can be up to death for rape and at least seven years' imprisonment for sexual assault on children under 12 years of age of both sexes, and at least ten years' severe imprisonment for abduction of a woman⁸². Regarding sexual assault as dealt with in the penal code, it is worth noting that the Criminal Chamber of the Egyptian Court of Cassation has ruled that it is not necessary to prove that the offender had full sexual intercourse with the victim against her will. It is sufficient that the offender touched the victim with his hands, reproductive organs or a device against the victim's will.⁸³

If the offender is one of the persons referred to in the second paragraph of Article 267 of this Act, or if he or she has functional, family or educational authority over the complainant or if he or she has exercised coercion against the complainant which the circumstances allow, or if the crime was committed by two or more persons or if at least one of them carries a weapon, the penalty shall be limited to imprisonment for not less than two years and not more than five years and a fine of not less than twenty thousand pounds and not more than fifty thousand pounds.

The Criminal Code (2014), in its articles 306 (a) and 306 (b) had been amended to criminalize sexual harassment, including sexual harassment in the workplace, as a form of aggravated punishment and violation of the Labour Code, for which the perpetrator is punished by penalties, up to the termination of the work contract. However, it only considers sexual harassment a crime if the intent of the perpetrator is to obtain sexual benefits. Further amendments to the anti-harassment law were adopted by the Parliament's legislative committee in 2017 where they introduced harsher punishments for perpetrators, including prison sentences of up to one year instead of 6 months, in addition to a fine. In July 2021,⁸⁴ the penalty for sexual harassment was increased from a minimum of one year in prison to a minimum of five years, or a penalty of up to 300,000 Egyptian pounds (\$19,100), up from 20,000 pounds. In situations where a power imbalance was in place because of a professional or familial relationship, or in cases involving the use of weapons or accomplices, the

⁸² The National Council of Women, 2016.

⁸³ Lolwa Reda, *Egyptian laws protecting women*, Egypt Today (Dec. 21, 2018), cited in Wesam Shahed: Women Rights Developments in Egypt Within The Past 20 Years, March 04, 2020 <https://www.msuir.org/new-blog/2020/3/4/women-rights-developments-in-egypt-within-the-past-20-years>

⁸⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/egypt-tightens-punishment-sexual-harassment-2021-07-12/>

penalty was increased from a minimum of 2 to a minimum of 7 years imprisonment, in addition to a 10-fold increase of the maximum fine to 500,000 Egyptian pounds.⁸⁵

Thus, it is clear that this amendment to the Penal Code serves to protect women in many areas from harassment and violence by defining, detailing and limiting the penalties for sexual harassment in many cases, such as educational and professional authority over women, and even in any circumstance, pressure can be exerted on women for sexual interest, which can occur in the economic field, which can clearly contribute to more protection and equality in economic and commercial practices and the danger that women may face.

2. Liberties and rights impacting women economic participation and empowerment⁸⁶

According to the article 27 of the 2014 Constitution amended in 2019, defines the ins and outs of the Egyptian economic system which “shall aim to ensure the prosperity of the country through sustainable development and social justice, in a manner that guarantees the increase of the real growth rate of the national economy, the raising of the standard of living, the increase of employment opportunities, the reduction of unemployment rates and the elimination of poverty. The economic system respects standards of transparency and governance, supporting competitiveness and encouraging investment, balanced geographical, sectoral and environmental growth, and preventing monopolistic practices, taking into account financial and trade balance and a fair tax system, controlling market mechanisms, ensuring different types of ownership and balancing the interests of different parties, in a way that preserves the rights of employees and protects the consumer. The economic system is socially committed to ensuring equal opportunities, fair distribution of the benefits of development, reduction of income disparities and respect for a minimum wage and pension that guarantees a decent life, and a maximum in state agencies for all those who work for a wage, according to the law”.⁸⁷

Moreover, “inalienable rights and freedoms of citizens may not be suspended or reduced. No law regulating the exercise of rights and freedoms may restrict such rights and freedoms in a manner prejudicing the substance and the essence thereof. (Art. 92)”.⁸⁸

- *Right to work*

In spite of the very low women’s level of participation in both the labour force and employment, Egypt has a number of laws and regulations that promote gender equality and support women’s participation in the labour force. Constitutionally “work is a right, duty and honor guaranteed by the State. No citizen may be forced to work except as required by Law and for the purpose of performing a public service for a fixed period in return for a fair consideration, and without prejudice to the basic rights of those obliged to carry out such work (Art. 12)”.

This right is confirmed by the Labour Law and as a duty guaranteed by the state on the basis of equal opportunities for men and women in holding public posts and in respect to economic and social rights. The state is committed to ensure women empowerment to reconcile their family duties and work requirements. Discrimination in wages is prohibited on any ground including sex. In line with the International labour standards, the Labour Law prevents women from working night shifts or

⁸⁵ \$1 = 15.64 Egyptian pounds

⁸⁶ See more at <http://gender-trade.cawtarclearinghouse.org/>

⁸⁷ <https://mansurat.org/node/14675>

⁸⁸ <https://mansurat.org/node/14675>

being employed in jobs that are harmful to their physical or mental health as well as from hard work. The employer is required to display women's employment rules and regulations in an accessible place to inform women of their rights.

Civil Service Law establishes equal rights between men and women, as the right to unpaid leave to accompany a spouse in the case of traveling abroad for work or study and acknowledges women's right to work half the time compared to half of the wage considering this provision as positive discrimination. Men were also entitled to this right which is more consistent with the spirit of gender equality.

- *Freedom of movement*

Article 62 of the 2014 Constitution amended in 2019 stipulates that "Freedom of movement, residence and immigration is guaranteed. No citizen may be expelled from the territory of the State or prevented from returning to it. S/he may be prevented from leaving the territory of the State, or placed under house arrest, or forbidden to reside in a specific body, only by a reasoned judicial order for a specific period of time, and in the cases provided for by law".⁸⁹

- *Right to property*

According to the article 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the 2014 Constitution amended in 2019 private properties of its three types: public property, private property and cooperative property shall be protected by the State. Public property is inviolable and may not be violated, and its protection is a duty in accordance with the law.

According to the Personal Status Law in Egypt, women have the same property rights as men. Women are entitled to be the sole owner of their properties and have the right to control them. Upon turning 21, a woman has the full right to deal with her properties on an equal basis as men without any sort of gender-based discrimination.

Constitutionally, the State shall endeavour to stimulate the private sector to fulfil its social responsibility in the service of the national economy and society (Article 36). Egypt's domestic legal framework grants de jure property rights protections to investors that are consistent with high, modern standards of protection. The protection of investors' rights is both constitutional and legislative, and, notwithstanding the application of bilateral investment treaty provisions, the same degree of legal protection and available incentives is granted to foreign and domestic investors.

- *Right to inheritance*

It should be noted that the legal system governing inheritance for Muslim women according to Law No. 77 of the year 1943 is based on the inheritance provisions of the Shariah and Fiq'h. This means that women inherit all types of inheritance through the imposition of charges or male relatives or female relatives, uterine or otherwise. Inheritance for non-Muslims (Christians and Jews) is governed by their religious laws, personal status and spiritual guidance. Moreover, in the Egyptian legal system, the right to inheritance enjoys constitutional protection. Indeed, according to the article 35 of the Constitution, as the right to property, the right to inheritance is secured/guaranteed and supposed to be governed by the Personal Status, Civil Law and Inheritance Laws.

⁸⁹ <https://manshurat.org/node/14675>

Despite this, women have suffered greatly from being prevented from their inheritance rights by their families, the issue that led legislators to undertake an amendment to some laws in 2017 related to inheritance by reducing the period of death considered and giving a criminal sanction to people who prevent or veil any share of the heirs or documents that prove this share. It is clear that women have benefited from these measures through access to their rights as well as quick response and court decisions. However, this remains insufficient as the responses need to be addressed by a society more attuned to these newly legalised principles.

In fact, the right to inheritance is considered a main economic resource and a basis of wealth influencing women's financial independence. In this regard, it largely influences women's financial rights and their property rights, abilities and competences in this area. Yes, under Egyptian law, women can own, inherit and use land and property independently but yet, as in virtually all countries in the region, every effort is made to keep land within the family, In rural and agricultural areas, every effort is made to keep land within the family through male heirs so that it is not left in the hands of strangers, with clear reference not only to the husband but also to the children of female heirs.

- *Freedom of investment*⁹⁰

Egypt has a long tradition of economic liberalism and openness to foreign direct investment, which, combined with a strong legal culture, has resulted in a succession of laws regulating investment. The pace of reform has accelerated in recent years, resulting in a modernised regulatory and institutional environment for investment. In an initiative to underline the government's pro-investment stance, Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation/MIIC and General Authority for Investment and Free Zones/GAFI introduced a new investment law, issued by Law No. 72 of 2017, which formally replaced the Investment Law No. 8/1997 and its subsequent amendments, while retaining most of the main changes introduced by the 2015 amendment. This was followed by the adoption of the corresponding executive regulations in October 2017.

The Investment Law provides the full spectrum of investment guarantees and protection standards that are required to provide a safe de jure regime for investors. It contains a provision granting fair and equitable treatment to both foreign and Egyptian investors, and a guarantee that the invested capital cannot be subject to any coercive or discriminatory measures. With this latest reform, the government marked an important step and reaffirmed the strong political will to further improve the country's business environment and competitiveness. The substantive content of the new law has therefore been enriched, while retaining most of the main changes introduced by the 2015 amendment. The new law focuses on addressing the obstacles to investment and overcoming major procedural and substantive problems faced by investors. The amendment also introduced both a set of additional incentives and an explicit principle of social responsibility of investors. Meanwhile, the 2017 amendment also introduced a set of additional advantages and incentives. It grants non-Egyptian investors residence in Egypt (Art. 3.4), and its executive regulations provide for additional guarantees for foreign employees.

⁹⁰ Main source: OECD Investment Policy Reviews: Egypt 2020 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9f9c589a-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9f9c589a-en&csp=1a0017284fd213909b8930994bc6bae6&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book>

In the same spirit of highlighting the opportunities and advantages available to investors, the law provides for the development of an investment map that defines the type of investment, the regime, the geographical areas and sectors, as well as the real estate owned by the State or other public legal entities that are ready for investment, and the modalities and mode of disposal of such real estate according to the type of investment regime (Article 17). Another important aspect of the amendment (Chapter 7) is the emphasis on the principle of social responsibility of investors through allocations of a percentage of its annual profits to be used to establish a social development scheme, with a tax deduction of the amount spent by the investor under the provisions of the Income Tax Act (91/2005).

The comprehensive package of reforms, together with the new investment law as amended by Law 141 of 2019 streamlines and strengthens the administration of investment projects, forming a more coherent body of legislation that is more conducive to enhancing investor confidence in the stability and certainty of the Egyptian regulatory and institutional ecosystem. In fact, the degree of openness that investors encounter when establishing themselves in Egypt, and the conditions they face in their day-to-day operations, are only part of a broader investment environment. The protection of property, contractual rights and other legal safeguards provided to investors, both in national legislation and in international agreements, combined with effective enforcement mechanisms and guarantees of access to effective dispute resolution mechanisms, are key elements of a favourable investment climate.

As part of the state's efforts to encourage the Egyptian economy, the Law No. 152 of the year 2020 regarding the development of the medium, small, and micro-enterprises has been issued. The law aims to reduce the informal sector of the economy with a view to promoting employment in the formal sector and, in this way, ensuring the full enjoyment of economic and social rights by all workers. Moreover, it aims to legalize SME's status under the Egyptian laws. The law defined both of the medium, small and micro enterprises as well as the Informal Sector of Economy as follows: Each medium, small or micro project that carries out its activities without obtaining a building or operating license, or any other license or approval that is necessary for the practice of the activity and determined by a decision of the Prime Minister. The law is encouraging the aforementioned projects, in several ways, whether by providing tax, customs, or non-tax incentives or by other attractive incentives. Hence, the investor will be able to enjoy tax, customs, or non-tax incentives or other attractive incentives.

The law is encouraging the aforementioned projects and the investors, in several ways, whether by providing tax, customs, or non-tax incentives or by other attractive incentives. It is worthy to mention that the aforementioned incentives are available for several fields such as the projects operating in the informal sector that apply to reconcile their situation; Digital transformation and industrial intelligence projects; Industrial projects or projects that deepen the local component in their products or projects that replace and renew machinery and equipment and technological systems related to the production process; Projects that serve agricultural or animal production; Projects that work in the field of information technology or related services; Projects that introduce new innovations into industry and technology systems; New and renewable energy projects and by a decision of the Board of Directors, new activities or fields may be created whenever needed. This

law is all the more important for women as all the available data or observation confirms that women represent the majority in the informal sector⁹¹.

Yet, it is important to point out that the new laws published, such as the Investment Law and/or the Industrial Development Law, refer to new technical tools frequently used in the economic field and new concepts in line with international standards and administration such as transparency, good governance and equality or equity of opportunity in general remain silent or even blind to anything related to whether direct or indirect gender issues such as male or female investors, women economic participation or empowerment or even equality between men and women.

- *Freedom of commerce*

National legislations in relation to trade, economy and investment are the Egyptian Constitution of 2014 , Exports Development Law No. 155 of 2002, Investment Law No. 72 of 2017, Bankruptcy Law No. 11 of 2018, Central Bank Law NO.88 of 2003, Trade law No. 19 of 1999, Customs Law No. 66 of 1963 and its amendments No. 59 for the year 2005, Financial Control Law No. 10 of 2009 , Commercial Registration Law No. 34 of 1976 , Companies Law No. 159 of 1981, Labor Law No. 12 of 2003 , the Income Tax Law No. 91 of 2005, Commercial Chambers Law No. 189 of 1951, The Small and Micro Institutions Law No.141 of 2004, and the Companies Law No. 159 of 1981, the civil service law no. 81 of 2016...

The government has adopted several key laws regulating business activities. The Collateral Registry Act (115/2015) relaxed the use of movable assets as collateral by businesses and established an electronic collateral registry. In 2018, the revision of the Companies Law (159/1981) significantly improved the investment environment by expanding the scope of available business structures and providing the possibility to establish single-person companies in Egypt. The Law on Streamlining the Licensing of Industrial Establishments (15/2017) was a long-awaited improvement to the existing licensing system, and the Law on Restructuring, Preventive Reconciliation and Bankruptcy in Egypt (the Bankruptcy Law, 11/2018), introduced, for the first time in Egypt, a non-jurisdictional restructuring mechanism for bankrupt companies. The law also gave authority to the courts to enforce corporate restructuring plans and created a court-supervised mediation system⁹².

The analysis of the above legislations related to trade, economy and investment reveals that they have a common feature which is obvious. That is being gender blind and do not incorporate the words gender, men and women, and females. Although these key words are frequently used in the economic and commercial fields such as merchants, drawers, or any legal person. For example, Article 2 of the Export Development Law No. 155 of 2002 stipulates that a fund called "Export Development Fund" shall be established, which shall have the general legal personality. The Minister shall follow the foreign trade. It aims at increasing the volume of export and expanding its fields, increasing the competitiveness of Egyptian exports of goods and services and reducing the burdens of exports. In the sectors of production of goods and services and for this purpose B) Assist producers to increase their export capabilities by conducting technical and marketing research and establishing inspection laboratories, marketing research centers, and training centers. D) Mitigating

⁹¹ Egypt: New Law regarding the development of Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=1e5f322f-d319-4016-bd9a-49f6da50320a>

⁹² Main source: OECD Investment Policy Reviews: Egypt 2020 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9f9c589a-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9f9c589a-en&csp=1a0017284fd213909b8930994bc6bae6&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book>

the financing burdens on exporters to equalize with the competitors in the international markets ...
e) Strengthen the ability of exporters to marketing and promotion in the fields of commodity and service exports. Similarly, Article 1 of the Income Tax Law promulgated by Law No. 91 of 2005 stipulates that in the application of the provisions of this Law, the following terms and expressions shall have the meaning given to each of them: Tax: Income tax from one part and the taxpayer: The natural person or the legal person subject to tax in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Other laws although not directly covering direct economic and/or commercial activities. This is the case of certain provisions of the Civil Service Act, which may pave the way for a commercial fund for women - or for men - in case just for instance they apply for and obtain an early retirement through insurance compensation, which is far from negligible. At this age and in this position, good funds will be possible in addition to the experience and expertise acquired during the civil service, in the economic or other field.

The word Discrimination used in the field of trade and economic legislations mostly refers to eliminating the differentiation between national capital and funds and international ones, or between local and international big and small companies and institutions and does not refer to the practice of discrimination between men and women. It is important to note that the composition of Boards of Competition and Anti-monopoly Agency and the Industrial Development Authority do not have a quota for women or any presentation of women. The Law of establishment of both agencies did not stipulate any obligatory representation of women in the Boards, despite that women are involved in all commercial fields and their representation is very important.

In this context, it is important to recall the near absence of women in the composition of the boards of the Competition and Anti-Monopoly Agency and the Industrial Development Authority. There are no measures, quotas or otherwise, to enforce the participation or presence of women in these bodies. The law establishing these two agencies does not stipulate mandatory representation of women on boards, although women are involved in all areas of business and their representation is very high. Another example is the law on commercial registration which introduces an element that can be considered discriminatory as it has nothing to do with commercial and economic activities. For example, the initiation and/or omission of commercial registration and the relationship between the statuses of married or divorced person, which in itself may constitute a kind of exclusion.

Other laws establish direct control of certain persons which can be considered as discrimination in relation to the power reserved for certain family members over women. For example, Article 1 (Income Tax Act No. 91 of 2005): For the purposes of this Act, the following words and expressions are defined according to the meaning attached to each of them as follows Joint person: each person linked to the taxpayer by a relationship affecting the tax field, including: wife, husband, ascendants-fathers, children of descendants. Such discrimination is likely to negatively affect women's control over their own assets. The wording of the article may present an influence of a certain relationship such as the relationship between father and children or wife and husband on the tax field or the obligatory payments of this tax for the activity carried out by the taxpayer which produce a certain and unreasonable relationship depending on the position and relationships of the woman in the family and her business activity or the taxes paid by her⁹³.

⁹³ See more at Gender & Trade Country Profile (Egypt) <http://gender-trade.cawtarclearinghouse.org/>

- *Right to enjoy banking facilities*

According to the Article 51 of the Central bank and Monetary Body Law No.88 of 2003, the account of a natural person property includes what he owns added to the possessions of his relatives till the fourth degree, and for the property account of artificial person what is owned by the artificial person added to the possessions of each board member in this artificial person either the member is a natural or artificial person, or the possessions with any other artificial person either under the real and direct control for the same natural or artificial person, also the property account includes what is owned by more than a natural or artificial person related by an agreement of right practice in the general assembly or the bank board which leads to a real and direct control upon any of these positions and bodies. According to the structure of this article, this reveals that the existence of any natural or artificial person in a certain relation can affect the amount or property account of an account owner according to the system of the central bank as long as this relation leads to a direct and real control which may be existed easily between men and women and of course affect the accounts of each other according to the existence of this bond of direct and real control. Such discrimination is likely to affect negatively the control of women on their own assets.

In September 2019, the Financial Regulatory Authority/FRA in Egypt proposed amendments to the EGX Listing Rules to ensure women's representation on the boards of the Non-Banking Financial Institutions/NBFIs to ensure women's representation on the governing board of companies. The two 2019 decrees (123, 124) issued by the FRA require both companies listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange and non-bank financial institutions listed to have at least one woman on the board by the end of 2020. The decision reflects the FRA approach to further improve the ranking of Egypt in the World Bank's *Doing Business* report. The decision comes also in line with the FRA's commitment to achieve sustainable development and women empowerment plans as well as the implementation of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women by the year 2030, in which women are supposed to hold 30% of leadership positions in the country.⁹⁴

3. The International standards and Human Rights

Egypt is committed to the international conventions of human rights that were ratified by it. These international conventions have the force of law after publication in accordance with the specified circumstances. Egypt ratifies the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1982, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Radical Discrimination in 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 with some reservations as they contradict some provisions of Islamic Sharia. The same reservations apply to some articles of the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights.

In addition, Egypt ratified two key ILO's Conventions with respect to gender equality and women's rights: Promotion of Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100), and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), which promotes equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men in employment and occupation and focuses on the elimination of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, and social origin. Egypt ratified the Night Work (Women) Convention, 1960 (141) and the

⁹⁴ <https://sseinitiative.org/all-news/exchange-in-focus-egyptian-fra-requires-women-on-boards/> <https://sseinitiative.org/all-news/egyptian-fra-further-increases-women-representation-on-boards/>

Night Work (Women) Convention, 1960 (No.41) both denounced and replaced by the Night Work (Women) Convention, 1948 (No.89) and the Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171), which Egypt has not ratified.⁹⁵

According to the article 93 of the 2014 Constitution amended in 2019, "The State shall be bound by the international human rights agreements, covenants and conventions ratified by Egypt, and which shall have the force of law after publication in accordance with the prescribed conditions". However, the majority of the provisions of the personal status code is in total contradiction both with this constitutional provision and with those of international standards yet ratified by the Republic of Egypt.

4. Mechanisms, Policies and programmes

▪ *The mechanisms*

Many mechanisms do exist in Lebanon addressing human rights and a number of their principles such as non-discrimination, gender equality, women empowerment, sustainable development... Only two will be quoted as the main examples in relation with the area of interest.

→ *The National Council for Women (NCW)*

According to law No. 30 2018, the *National Council for Women (NCW)* is the mandated national women's machinery in Egypt, to propose responsive policies to women needs, legislations, action plans as well as conduct training programs and awareness raising mechanism for women. It has 27 active local branches that work closely with communities and community women leaders. It has reached out to 24 million women beneficiaries on ground in the past 4 years.

The NCW established the Women Ombuds's office to help them in claiming and getting their rights and launched in 2007 the implementation of the project "violence against women", which included the following outputs: a comprehensive study on the phenomenon of violence against women at the level of the republic in 2009, as well as a framework for a national strategy to combat violence and the Planning of future activities associated with them.⁹⁶ The National Strategy to combat Violence against Women (VAW) was adopted and endorsed by the Cabinet and the participation of 20 Ministries (2015).

NCW's implementation mechanism for women's economic empowerment is the Women Business Development Centre (WBDC). It was established in 2002 to implement NCW's mandate for the economic empowerment of women. The center was ranked in 2013 by the OECD as one of the leading providers of business development support services for women in the MENA region. Since its establishment, WBDC has carried out numerous activities in areas ranging from ICT, vocational and entrepreneurship training for MSMEs and new graduates, to soft skills and capacity building for government agencies and youth groups. Egypt's vision 2030, the Social and Economic Plan 2015, and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) strategy place priorities on women's employment and SMEs development.

→ *The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA) -*

⁹⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_551168.pdf

⁹⁶ The National Council of Women, 2016.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA) - formerly the Social Fund for Development has been supported by UNDP in establishing a Gender Unit to mainstream gender in all of its programmes and operations, both at central and local levels. The Gender Unit has conducted several in-house training sessions, produced promotional materials to advocate for women's economic empowerment as well as implemented a pilot gender equality strategy and action plan. The unit is also assessing MSMEDA's financial and non-financial services from a gender lens to provide a renewed strategic direction, focused on fostering women's economic empowerment. To the same end, the 2016/2017 national budget included an allocation of 250 million Egyptian pounds to increase public nursery schools. This allocation was increased to EGP 500 million in the 2017/2018 budget and EGP 600 million in 2018/2019. This is to support women's engagement in the private sector.

- *Policies and programmes*

At policy level, there is a number of policy, strategy and programme documents addressing women empowerment and gender equality are herewith selected:

- *“The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030”*

“The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030” adopted in 2017 by President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi has a strong focus on the economic empowerment of women and their participation in the labour market. However, in reality these principles have not yet fully concretised in the life of women due to their low presence in the labour Market. In 2018, the NCW established an online National Observatory of Women (ENOW) that will follow up on the National Women's Strategy 2030's implementation through the rigorous application of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including the establishment of baselines and indicators to measure and track progress. The NWO provides sex disaggregated data to help all the stakeholders in collecting data and analyzing women's relative situation to men. The NWO contains 35 indicators of monitoring the National Women's Strategy 2030; these indicators are set to be monitored each five years until reaching 2030.

- *The Women Business Development Centre (WBDC) programme*

One of the programmes of the NCW is the Women Business Development Centre (WBDC). It carried out numerous activities such as: “Zaneen Market”, a women friendly environment market - ICT, vocational and entrepreneurship training for SMEs and new graduates - product development program called “Addaha W2doud” - the first Social Innovation Hub has been launched at the National Council for Women (NCW) in 2016- 1m youth outreach through “masr taamel Egypt works” initiative - launch of the hour code campaign for computer science and coding education- An environmental camp that has been implemented in 6 Governorates - Speed Mentoring Program in the field of entrepreneurship and SMEs development - IBDL Program -International Business Driving License for business management - The "Basic Guide to start your own business Program - GET Ahead Manual- Community Kitchen Initiative "Mumm" model - The Operator's " Mashaghil" Initiative Model.

- *The Gender Equality award certification programme*

Egypt is the 2nd country globally to launch Gender Equality award certification program for private and public organizations to recognize the good performance of those organizations and deliver

transformational gender equality results. Medium, small, and micro enterprises development agency MSMEDA is the first agency in Egypt and the Arab region to receive this seal. Tourism sector is also the first to start applying the gender equality award principles & criteria globally.

→ *The Women policy Tracker on Responsive Policies*

Egypt launched the first edition of Women policy Tracker on Responsive Policies and Programs during the New COVID-19 Pandemic on 14th March – 6th of April,⁹⁷ the second edition on the 6th of April – 6th May⁹⁸ and the third on 6th May -6th June). Indeed, facing the COVID pandemic Egypt was the first country globally to issue a women policy tracker that tracked 80 measures & policies taken by the government in response to COVID-19, that are considerate to women's need during the first 3 months of the outbreak in Egypt.⁹⁹ The document available online describes in detail the policies that are from the perspective of Government gender/COVID responsive. Examples of policies range from increasing social protection benefits to women, extending benefits to vulnerable women by lowering age requirement or increasing the number of beneficiaries for microcredit loans.

→ *The Export Promotion Strategy*

The objectives of *the Export Promotion Strategy*¹⁰⁰ are to double the Egyptian Exports in five years, encourage Small and Medium Enterprises to export, focus on high value-added exports and target new exports markets. The strategy relies on streamlining export procedures to shorten the procedures of exporting for exporters, putting in place an authority to ensure the quality of exported products, increasing Egypt's participation in international expos, and offering technical assistance programs to exporters. It also highlights how to target exports markets and priority exports commodities to targeted markets.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ <http://ncw.gov.eg/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/coronatrackerenglish.pdf>

⁹⁸ <http://ncw.gov.eg/Images/PdfRelease/Second%20Edition%20Women%20policy%20Tr-52020711172342.pdf>

⁹⁹ <http://ncw.gov.eg/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/policypapereng.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACE490.pdf

¹⁰¹ Exports Promotion Agency. 2018, *Exports Promotion Strategy*, Exports Promotion Agency, Cairo.

Chapter II- Selected methodology and tools: the reality of the field

This part will introduce and provides a brief overview of the methodology intended to define the women business environment: constraints, obstacles and opportunities. For that purpose, an overall situation analysis will be conducted through assessing and refining the environment of women in business with pertinent and adapted approaches and tools that includes:

- Desk review to determine gender inequalities and gaps in business environment based on the available data,
- SMEs profiling and actors' mapping targeting both businessmen and women for a comparative gender analysis purpose,
- Stakeholder's assessment (Rapid Assessment) and analysis to identify constraints and challenges,
- Undertaking a Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA in a number of sectors/subsectors and related SMEs owned/managed by women and men.

A sample selected from the sectors to be selected (e.g. Agriculture, Light Industries¹⁰² and services to only quote these two examples) will allow identification of main gaps and comparative analysis.

Challenges and limitations with regards to COVID-19 whether direct or indirect and subsequent necessary adjustments to the methodology are described herewith.

Section I – The Selected methodology and tools

1. The Framework

1.1. The desk review

The Desk review is critical for:

- Avoiding duplication of previous studies and,
- Focusing new data collection on issues of concern or areas requiring verification.

The desk review conducted was to a useful way to:¹⁰³

- Help as a preliminary assessment of the existing information and plan the subsequent situation analysis,
- Cross-check other data and/or provide a standard of comparison,
- Provide a baseline for longitudinal and before/after comparisons,
- Help on refining the design of the assessment/analysis by confirming key issues and questions,

¹⁰² Light industry/industries are usually less capital-intensive than heavy industry and are more consumer-oriented than business-oriented, as they typically produce smaller consumer goods. Most light industry products are produced for end users rather than as intermediates for use by other industries

¹⁰³ Adapted from www.ceecis.org/remf/Service3/unicef

- Learn about the context of the programme to be developed and/or evaluated,
- Learn about the previous realisations related to the area of interest (other institutions and organisations),
- Answer some questions (for strategic planning and advocacy).

Carrying out a desk research/review is a critical first step, for at least three reasons:¹⁰⁴

- i. Knowing what was gone before will let you focus on new things to be known,
- ii. Acquiring this preliminary knowledge will avoid you asking dumb or irrelevant questions to your clients, stakeholders and partners and will increase your credibility,
- iii. Doing a preparatory research is a waste of time for the researcher/reviewer, the organisation and partners. This time might be gained to make the necessary efforts to understanding the domain issues and then find the time to discuss, refine, prioritize, negotiate and build consensus on the issue to be addressed.

Acquiring knowledge and credibility will support consensus building and ownership in planning and implementing the required activities to achieve the expected results.

1.2. Assessment and Analysis

▪ *Quantitative vs. Qualitative approaches*

In the world of research, assessment and analysis, there are two general approaches to gathering and reporting information: the quantitative and the qualitative approaches.¹⁰⁵

- **The quantitative approach** focuses on describing a phenomenon across a larger number of individuals using survey methods. It tends to approximate phenomena thereby providing the possibility of summarizing characteristics across groups or relationships.
- **The qualitative approach** focuses on describing and understanding a phenomenon from a closer perspective and in a deep comprehensive manner.

▪ *Quantitative vs. Qualitative methods and measures*¹⁰⁶

Both methods & measures can produce data and information that can be presented in numeric or narrative form. When starting a research, an assessment and/or situation analysis a decision should be made on the depth of the needed information:

- Quantitative measures- produce data that shares facts or figures,
- Qualitative Methods- produce data with more depth and description.

Assessment is not always completed with just one method. Use of mixed Methods-is highly recommended.

In conclusion, *Qualitative and Quantitative methods are, in fact, complementary.*¹⁰⁷ Each has strengths and weaknesses that the other doesn't, and together, they can present a clearer picture of

¹⁰⁴ Adapted from www.ceecis.org/remf/Service3/unicef

¹⁰⁵ On Methods: What's the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches?: Adar Ben-Eliyahu, <http://chronicle.umbmentoring.org>

¹⁰⁶ <http://baselinesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/>

the situation than either would alone. Often, the most accurate information is obtained when several varieties of each method are used. That's not always possible, but when it is, it can yield the best results.

→ The approach has been pre-structured and the conceptual and analytical framework established where dimensions and topics, categories and subcategories as and dimensions were defined beforehand.

2. Gender Framework

2.1. Gender Conceptual Framework

Gender concept/framework is about *“the different views of how men and women behave in different cultures (and how)... gender difference and identity is given not only by our biology but also from the views of our society... Gender views may change, while being male or female doesn't”*.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, societies and cultures base their maleness and femaleness' definition and their views on what gender identities are or should be in reference to the male and female sex which becomes and stay the main bedrock of the society and define the present and future of both women and man at each step of their life cycle, in both private and public life.

It means that all societies, cultures, religions, political and economic systems have their own vision on what are the place (status) and roles of women and men. They may have the same or different vision of what masculinity and femininity should be, and a concordance of views on the value granted to women and men: *Masculinity and Femininity are the widely shared expectations and norms about appropriate male/man being and appropriate female/woman being.*

Social Construction of Gender/SCG refers to economic, social and cultural attributes associated with being male/man or female/woman. In fact, society prescribes for women and men, through life cycle, specific places and roles establishing relationships and defining the “masculine and feminine” behaviours and thus valuing them differently.

2.2. Gender Analytical Framework and concepts

Analysing gender status, roles and related relations in a given context and environment will provide information on the effects of different conditions that women and men face in this environment. “At the local level, gender analysis makes visible the varied roles women and men, girls and boys play in the family, in the community, and in economic, legal and political structures. A gender perspective focuses on the reasons for the current division of responsibilities and benefits and their effect on the distribution of rewards and incentives”.¹⁰⁹

The best way to know something is simply to ask. For a Gender Analysis there are three main areas or questions that have to be responded to, to ensure an accurate Gender Assessment & Diagnosis. These questions are:

- Who does what? When? Where and with whom? (**Roles & relationships**);
- Who utilizes what? (**Access to resources**). Who decides who uses it? What is used

¹⁰⁷ Community Assessment: Qualitative Methods to Assess Community Issues (Section 15) in <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

¹⁰⁸ <http://talkitover.in/self/gender-stereotypes>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/genderanalysis-analysecomparative.aspx?lang=eng>

and how? (**Control over resources**);

→ Who will need what and why? (**Needs**).

→ *Gender roles: Productive, Reproductive and Community roles*

The simplest and easiest definition of the societal recognised gender roles is that society will assign tasks to man and woman, as well as related responsibilities and rights that flow from them; based on their biology or sex belonging:

Gender Productive Role/PR covers the tasks undertaken by men and women that get paid/wages in cash however recognised only for men because they are assigned to be the breadwinner of the family (nuclear or extended depending on the context).

Gender Reproductive Role/RR is associated with family care, spouse, children and other family members covering sometimes two to three generations, and all related domestic tasks that ensure the sustainability of *reproduction of labour regarding the continuity of the family*.¹¹⁰ It is a role recognised by the society only for women in relation to their capacity to have and therefore take care of children.

Gender Community Role/CR was first used in reference to any activity that contributes to the benefit and wellbeing of the community essentially in rural areas. These activities are usually carried out by women – as an extension of their reproductive *role* – or even by girls of the *community* such as the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, wood, health care and education¹¹¹ and therefore this role is not only assumed by women or in rural areas. The CR has to be consistent with the “traditional” gender distribution of roles: the leadership and authority for men and the services, (i.e. education, health, family, children and reproductive health) to women.

The RR and PR are economically interlinked: without the first, the second could under no circumstances be executed or at least will be greatly restricted. In that sense, both roles are profoundly economic. Yet when calculating the Gross National Product (GNP), only the PR is taken into consideration. *Women’s contribution (RR)* to the national economy remains invisible because it is not recognised in the economic meaning of the term, but as a part of women’s “natural” role derived from their “natural” function: procreating and caring for the well-being of the human species. *Even socially, the RR, as a “woman’s work”, is not always well appraised if at all.*

→ *Access to and control of/over resources*

The way men and women are assigned to different roles and responsibilities, has a direct implication on the level of their access to and the control over resources. Indeed, access to & control over resources goes beyond household or social resources. It will depend on the value attributed to men or women roles and related contributions which will necessarily impact the equal enjoyment of these resources and corresponding legal and human rights. There is a direct relationship between women’s status and their access to and control over resources with a wider impact on their own human and legal rights as well as development outcomes. Historically, due to the gender division of labour, patriarchal cultural norms and laws as well as economic inequalities, women in all their

¹¹⁰ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/-main.pdf>

¹¹¹ <http://www.glopp.ch/A5/en/multimedia/A51pdf1.pdf>

diversity have been denied access to resources such as education, health services, credit, land and technologies.¹¹²

The analysis of the differentiated level of access to/control over resources for women from one part and men, from the other part, is essential for the GSVCA and crucial to detect discriminatory practices and identify consequent gender gaps, develop and plan interventions to address them and meet gender practical and strategic needs towards Gender Equity and Equality in Human Rights.

→ *Gender Needs assessment & categorization*

Gender Needs/GNs should be well assessed, identified and understood to ensure they are addressed properly with the adequate, effective and equitable response for men and women. It is worth to note that maintaining balance between multiple roles has major implications for women and serious consequences on their access to and control over resources to only quote **health, well-being** and time management and effects on meeting their needs either practical or strategic.

Origin of the *Gender Needs* is defined in a three-step process. The Gender assessment and analysis must answer the essential questions of "who will do what, where, why and how" (roles) who benefits from what? (Access to/control over resources) and then determines "who needs what and why?" (needs). In this context, it is important to highlight once again that:

1. Women's **roles**, work and contribution to family, community and society as a whole resulting from their multiple roles are not recognized and remain undervalued
2. Because of the inequitable gender distribution and evaluation of gender roles and duties, women's access to and control over **resources** is limited
3. Consequently, **gender needs** both practical and strategic are not only under-assessed but also not met equitably, to the disadvantage of women and sometimes of men.

Practical Gender Needs/PGNs are the immediate needs identified by women & men as necessary to their survival. PGNs are access to food, water provision, healthcare, primary education... They are defined in the frame of their socially designed and accepted roles within the existing gender dynamics and related power structures without challenging them.

Strategic Gender Needs/SGNs mean allowing more choices, more options and more voice. It addresses gender-based-discrimination, unbalanced women and men's relationships, subordination, inequities and inequalities. SGNs are those related to any change in the current gender redistribution of labour and power and defying gender roles, preventing or punishing GBV, access to equal pay for equal pay... SGNs challenge the societal, political and economic establishment.

¹¹² <http://www.forum.awid.org/forum12/about-the-forum-theme/access-to-control-of-resources/>

3. The Tools

3.1. The mapping

Mapping is an essential tool for the research itself. As already mentioned, the current phase of the project is directed towards women entrepreneurs. Representation and outreach to such audience has been secured through partnership with the concerned governmental and non-governmental entities in the 6 target Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia), as well as identified partners and networks gathering primarily women and men entrepreneurs, SMEs, employers' organisations, Chambers of commerce and industry, networks of business and trade organisations.

The main targeted group is of women entrepreneurs through their SMEs and Professional Organisations from the 6 target countries then narrowing down to those most responsive based on past experience and lessons learnt but also based on the effects of COVID-19 that restricts movement and communication despite the virtual means. Women will be also reached in Business and Trade Support Organisations "BTSOs" (Chambers of commerce and industry, Employers' Confederations, Economic Development Agencies, Business Associations...). It was expected that the women machinery will constitute the main coordinator and advocate with other governmental institutions that are in charge of policy making in related areas, particularly ministries of Commerce, agriculture, industry and services. Unfortunately it was not always the case.

The purpose of the exercise is to produce and ensure a good knowledge of main actors and power forces in presence whether governmental institutions or non-governmental organisations, from public or private sectors as well as civil society organisations that are involved in the three selected sectors: Agriculture, light industries and services. Without narrowing to the subsectors, this preliminary identification of both claim holders and duty bearers will set the ground for establishing the sampling for the rapid assessment.

The mapping includes but is not limited to:

- Ministries Economy, Trade, Agriculture, Industry, Technologies/Telecommunications...
- Women machineries
- Financial institutions,
- Professional organisations (e.g. Business and Trade Support Organisations Employers, Employers' Confederations, Economic Development Agencies, Business Association, Chamber of Commerce)
- Any other...

The Actor's mapping will be broken down into four phases:

1. Identifying: listing relevant groups, organisations, and individual actors.
2. Analysing: understanding stakeholders' perspectives, interests and roles.
3. Mapping: visualizing relationships to objectives and other stakeholders.
4. Prioritizing: ranking stakeholder relevance and identifying issues.

The following template has been prepared to consolidate all information related to the enterprises and/or related organisations.

Table 10 - Actor's mapping template

Description of the institution/organisation/company	
Status/Type of Institution/Company/Organisation	
Geographical/sectoral coverage	
Sector/ Field of Work	Subsector
Number of Employees	Women
	Men
Areas of intervention	
Examples of products	
Clientele/customers	
Impact	How much did the company affect them? (Low/medium/high)
Influence	How much impact does business have on their sector? (Low/medium/high)
Actors' input to the sector	What is important to them?
	How could they contribute to the sector?

The process on the actor's mapping as a preliminary phase and subsequent results will be very important to finalise the sampling for the Rapid Assessment as well as the GSVCA. The to-be-collected information and the quality of the process and related will depend heavily on the knowledge of the people to be mapped and the field conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic either in case of lockdown or not.

3.2. The Rapid Assessment/ RA among business persons (men & women)

The data collection will be conducted (Remotely or Face to face) by selecting the enterprises from three sectors for each country. An email providing an explanation that introduces the purpose of the assessment and of the mapping will be sent. It will also outline the benefits gained for the participants from their participation in it.

The questionnaire consists of three parts that aim to collect data on:

- i. Demographic/personal characteristics of respondents (such as gender, age, education, previous experience in founding/managing a social enterprise, motivation, etc.). General characteristics of the enterprise (such as its type, size/number of employees, ownership structure, year of establishment, sector of economic activity, etc.).
- ii. Constraints and challenges to determine gender inequalities and gaps, and assess capacity and resources' needs towards priorities' selection at the level of the SMEs and women entrepreneurs themselves.
- iii. Opportunities and main barriers that women experience when trying to engage in, and benefit from, economic market opportunities will be also identified. This includes access to financing, and constraints for enterprises, the role of innovation during the life-cycle of the

enterprise, the influence of different categories of stakeholders on the decision-making process of the enterprise, and the capital of entrepreneurs.

Considering the difficulties of the field and some resistances and bureaucratic obstacles, in addition to Business persons (men & women), the RA will target also major actors in the “third sector” namely representatives from different concerned ministries, the local government and other relevant stakeholders (NGOs/Professional sector, media, and financial sector) selected as the most involved and appropriate to represent the social views of the whole sectors.

The findings of the interviews and FGDs help not only understand the respondents’ views but also refine the mapping/profiling as well as set a rapid diagnosis constituting a sort of qualitative baseline. The responses and related information expected to be collected thanks to the Rapid Assessment could be summarised in the following questions, for instance:

- 1) What is the geographic/demographic map of the community/department?
- 2) What are the people doing already?
- 3) What are the norms and Gender roles in your country?
- 4) What are the opportunities for employment?
- 5) What are the demands for goods and services?
- 6) What are the real opportunities (imbalances between demand and supply)?
- 7) Which skills are in-demand in relation to these opportunities?
- 8) What should training courses offer, on the basis of the demand for skills identified?
- 9) Which accompanying measures are needed to boost the opportunities identified?
- 10) What mechanisms of socio-economic exclusion can be observed?
- 11) What are the personal profiles of the individuals targeted for reintegration assistance?

A detailed structure/framework of the questionnaire and FGD with categories and sub-categories has been prepared. It will also include the assessment of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on both private and public life.

The analysis of the findings will constitute a frame of an evidence database which have been collected, regardless of data collection methodology (whether Focus Groups Discussions/FGDs, interviews– or secondary data sources) for the economic activities related to the three sectors, for each country and that could be categorized according to the coded question to provide subsequently the findings in the following section by:

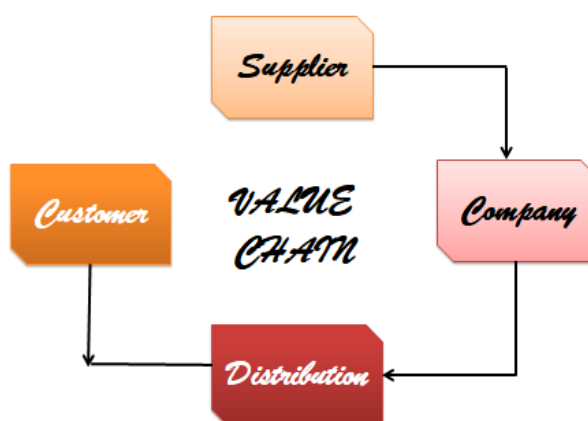
- a. In totality;
- b. Economic activities or sector;
- c. Specific country.

3.3. Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA

- *Value Chain Analysis/VCA: the definition*

The basic concept of Value Chains consists of at least 4 main elements: supplier, company, distribution and customer engaged in a sort of process/chain as herewith illustrated:

Figure 1 - Value Chain description



In fact, the value chain is a systemic concept that relates to each of the herewith development hypotheses because it connects commercial products/markets with economic actors (including self-employed) and with the business activities. The connection is expressed in the definition of the term “Value Chain” as:¹¹³

- The sequence of related business activities goes from the provision of specific inputs for a particular product or product range to primary production, transformation, and marketing, up to the final sale of the product to the consumer.
- The set of enterprises that perform these business activities, i.e. the producers, processors, traders and distributors of the particular product are linked by a series of business transactions by which the product is passed on from primary producers to consumers in end markets.

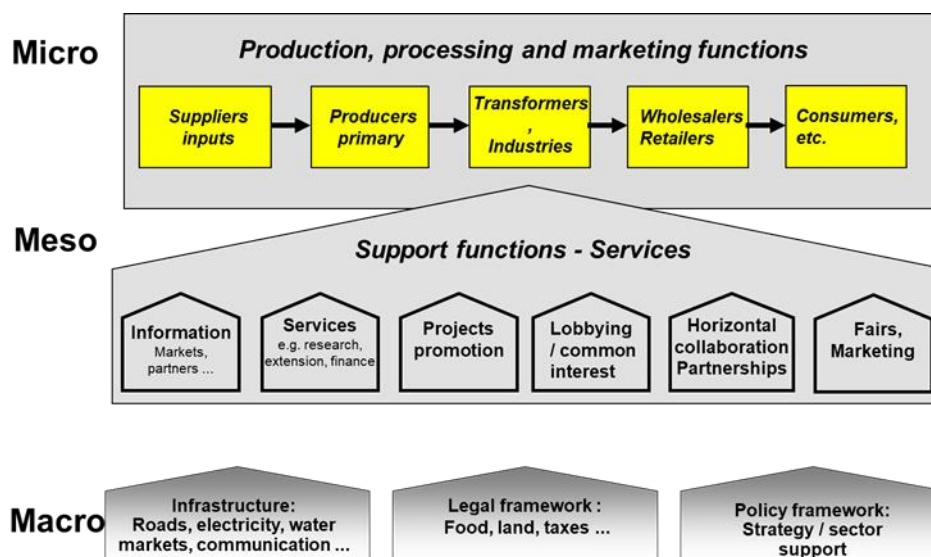
The basic concept of Value Chains is made up of 3 superimposed levels as detailed below:

- MICRO level: which focuses on suppliers, producers, company, distribution and customers engaged in a sort of process/chain? The enterprises are linked by a series of commercial transactions through which the product is transmitted from primary producers to consumers in final markets.
- MESO level: this level is represented by all the support service providers i.e. public and private support institutions that are integrated into the functioning of the value chain through technical support, financing, monitoring of standards and regulations in force, etc.

¹¹³ Andreas Springer-Heinze, Manual on Sustainable Value Chain Development (Value Links 2.0 - Volume 1, Value Chain Analysis, Strategy and Implementation) , 2018 , <https://www.valuelinks.org/material/manual/ValueLinks-Manual-2.0-Vol-1-January-2018.pdf>

- MACRO level: Public agencies performing a regulatory function whether regulations, norms, or international standards for a product or service.

Figure 2 – Levels of Value Chain



- *Value Chain Analysis/VCA: the tool*¹¹⁴

The VCA is a strategic analysis tool. It provides a visual method to analyse a company's business activities reviewing how the company can create a competitive advantage for itself. Value chain analysis helps a company understand how it adds value to something and subsequently how it can sell its product or service for more than the cost of adding the value, thereby generating a profit margin.

The Value Chain Analysis involves the collection of information on the entities (e.g. firms, primary input producer groups, households or producer associations) and market connections that make up a given value chain. The information collected clarifies the positions and roles of actors within the chain, and is used to better coordinate chain activities and improve the flow of products/services to end users (consumers).

- *Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis: the analytical framework*

Applying a gender lens to a Value Chain Analysis will allow the assessment of women-men equality regarding their participation in the economic activity as a whole.

The interlinked pillars that build the Gender Conceptual Framework namely gender roles, access to and control of resources and gender needs are also the main Gender analysis tools.

Table 11 - Gender Roles: Between being and doing

Man	Roles	Woman
Being a/the head of family/breadwinner	Productive	No income-generating role (money or other)

¹¹⁴ <https://www.visual-paradigm.com/guide/strategic-analysis/what-is-value-chain-analysis/>

<i>Being a father and a husband... Doing what?</i>	Reproductive	Being a wife, a mother and a housewife
Being the Chief /The Leader	Community	Being provider and a support and caring for others (children, elderly, vulnerable people...)

Men are **THE leaders** in the community, both in urban and rural settings. Their Community Role/CR is modelled on their Productive Role/PR. They negotiate with local or political authorities and speak on behalf of women, on their rights which are for them essentially duties. This leadership "function" is associated with the PR's capability rights and accordingly it is sometimes remunerated (salary or indemnity) even if the CR is supposed to be a volunteer work.

Women are **THE Providers**. Their CR is modelled on their Reproductive Role/RR. Indeed, very often it is observed that women are responsible for activities usually related to the management of family and community life or are in charge of tasks such as visiting and/or supporting the sick, the elderly, the orphans. They also adhere to and participate in parents-teachers associations or undertake charitable activities both in towns and in the countryside. Their CR tasks and activities will always reinforce their reproductive role, such as taking care and managing natural resources as collection of water and wood and more recently protection of the environment. In fact, things are far from being obvious as previously demonstrated, but it is important to note that the work related to the CR is intimately associated with the women's reproductive role and related gender stereotypes that assign to women certain types of very specific tasks.

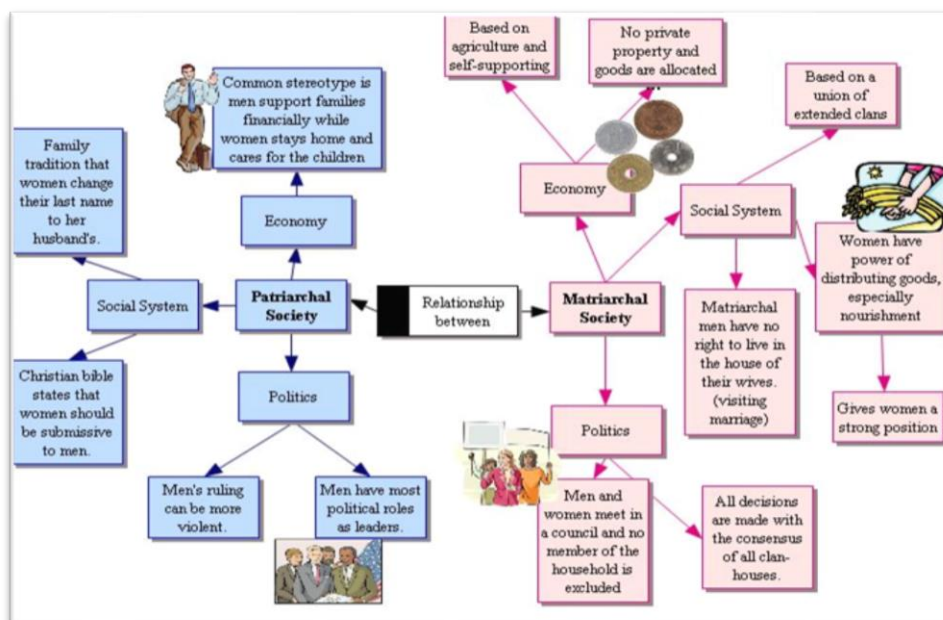
→ Gender sensitiveness

Gender sensitiveness is the ***process by which people are made aware of how gender plays a role in life through their treatment of others.*** Gender relations are present in all institutions and gender sensitivity especially is displayed in recognizing privilege and discrimination around gender; women are generally seen as disadvantaged in society.¹¹⁵

If principles, methodology, concepts & tools are universal, their application has to be contextualized and adapted to each environment, situation and sector, in time and space, in addition to depending on other factors. Culturally, socially and even economically, gender distribution of labour and roles as well as status of women and men could differ totally from the ones we usually deal with to only quote the two extreme patriarchal and matriarchal societies (as shown in the following example) but not only.

¹¹⁵ Gender Equity and Sensitivity in service delivery in [Gender Equity and Sensitivity in Service Delivery — MEASURE Evaluation](#)

Figure 3 - Example of Gender Analysis, societal organisation, culture and economy¹¹⁶



→ Why and how to mainstream Gender in the VCA?

Gaining a deeper understanding of value chains, will require special attention to gender roles, access to and control over resources as well as assessment of gender needs. This represents an important step towards reducing gender gaps and improving livelihoods for both women and men. Findings and recommendations will also help improving gender equality in value chain extension.

In entrepreneurship, regardless of the sector, many factors that limit women as well as men, from benefiting in related value chains are gender specific however with variations. For example, in the case of access to movable and immovable property, it is known that women's control over and ownership is less than that of men. Laws and customs as well as practices often show preference to men owning land over women.

Not having land or other property to use as collateral also limits women's access to many other resources and services, such as bank credits. Although there has been much work to improve women's access to microcredit over the years, there are still barriers excluding them from formal credit markets and larger loans which are required to support larger scale commercial production and processing.¹¹⁷ Women also lack the possibility of providing guarantees for bank loans (mortgages), membership in entrepreneurs/employers' associations, wider contractual possibilities that are only available to those who own this type of property: "one only lends to the rich" ... and throughout the word, women are the poorest.

In conclusion, as women have access to fewer resources, (e.g., labour, information, training, land, credit, association membership, power, decision making...), it is more difficult for them to maintain and improve their performance in value chains. It is important, therefore, that project upgrade

¹¹⁶ Image credit and reference « The fall of Matriarchal Society: Decline of the Sisterhood” <https://mythprojects.wikispaces.com/file/view/mat.andpat.societies.jpg/32182075/mat.andpat.societies.jpg>

¹¹⁷ Idem

decisions are informed by an analysis of the value chain that accounts for the role of gender. Improvements will then aim for the inclusion of interventions that target identified gender inequality concerns.

3.4. The GSVCA Operational Framework and Objectives

- *The step-by-step process of desk review & Rapid assessment*

In addition to quantitative data collection related to the overall SitAn, a preliminary source of information is the review and analysis of legislation and policies that could indicate how Gender is institutionalised and to which extent women and men's status and roles are structured in each concerned society and country, the imbalance in power relationships between women and men and consequent difference in access to and control over resources with focus on the covered sectors and accordingly what are the institutionalised forms of discrimination, if any and related gaps.

The findings of such review and analysis are very helpful in refining the assumptions, building up the gender analytical framework, defining its objectives and orienting the questioning and research. The Desk Review and RA's objectives could be detailed as follows:

- a) Identifying the research site as well as the target populations;
- b) Seeking stakeholders 'collaboration and in this context more specifically Women mechanisms and entrepreneurs' organisations;
- c) Providing a database including statistics;
- d) Analysing the socio-demographic data related to the target groups and population;
- e) Identifying gender gaps and defining problems;
- f) Mapping / profiling the organisations involved in the program;
- g) Involving the target groups/population in this exercise to ensure that their needs are identified according to desires and preferences are taken into consideration rather than those determined by experts;
- h) Providing information on attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in the project site and/or in the sectors covered by the assessment;
- i) Assessing/defining unmet needs and thus setting priorities: what are the needs that have to be met; what are the essential projects and the optional ones?
- j) Planning for the short, medium and long-term in consultation with involved stakeholders (at the end of the process).

A precautionary tale in the methodology applied is the availability of data which are already rather weak on the topic. When data is available, it is seldomly data on the same year, or based on the same criteria or even on the same sample. This limited and heterogeneous data restricts comparability and adds a layer of difficulty to the desk review and analysis.

- GSVCA goal and objectives

The methodology selected for the Gender Sensitive Value-Chain Analysis/GSVCA proposes approach and tools as well as sectors and sample for the GSVCA (Agriculture, Services, and Industry).

→ The goal of the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis is to evaluate the competitiveness and performance of a number of value chains in each selected sector/ sub sector in order to identify real or potential barriers and opportunities for women and men that may be shaped by custom, law, and institutional structure.

The Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis is expected to help in better understanding and developing strategies to address Gender-based discrimination and inequalities in the to-be selected value chains in terms of:

- Applying gender sensitive value chain extension services to their programming;
 - Accustoming to the various ways that men and women participate in value chains;
 - Providing gender training to extension workers to improve their abilities to work with men and women in the selected sectors and subsectors;
 - Develop extension materials in ways that are accessible to both men and women of different educational backgrounds and inclusive of relevant content;
 - Encourage the participation of women in mixed-sex producer and trade associations, including those in leadership positions;
 - Offer information about opportunities for women to find credit, gain access to land, and formalize rights to land and other productive inputs.
- *The GSVCA approach*

If adequately utilised, the Gender approach can better assess and meet needs of both men and women and enhance the well-being of the target groups. The Gender conceptual framework is the GSVCA analytical framework to be used to:

- Analyse gender distribution of labour & roles, in private and public life, i.e. family life and business environment,
- Diagnose accordingly existing/remaining loopholes as regard to sex- and gender-based discrimination,
- Identify power dynamics and related gender imbalance,
- Define, as a last step, gender gaps in access to and control over resources,
- Assess and prioritise needs that will have to be met to ultimately realize equal enjoyment of human rights for women and men.

The findings of the Rapid Assessment/RA will be helpful not only to refine the GSVCA techniques but also consolidate its results.

→ Thanks to the RA and the GSVCA, target groups will be able to focus on the review of the capacity of SMEs owned/managed by women in comparison of those of men from one part and the barriers and constraints detected of the selected sectors and jobs from the other part. The diagnosis will certainly help addressing identified gender differences and gaps and why they exist and determining weakness of capacity and resources if any, at the level of the SMEs and the women entrepreneurs themselves.

3.5. Selection of the sectors/subsectors and the Value Chains

- *Criteria for selecting the sectors and related subsectors*

This work is covering 6 countries and the main concern was to harmonise the methodology and tools from one part and the implementation on the field from the other part while ensuring consistency and comparability of results. The main criteria of selection of the sectors were based on the principle of commonality and could be summarized as follows:

- Sectors that could be assessed in the six countries: Agriculture, Light Industries and services,
- Experience in the field of VCA in the selected services,
- Presence of both men and women for the purpose of gender differentiation and analysis,
- Availability of information and organisations,
- Presence and/or potential access to markets...

As regard to the subsectors where the GSVCA will be conducted, the criteria that will be adopted for the selection of the subsectors are as follows:

- Availability of information (added value, work force, sufficient number of companies, etc.),
- Exports opportunities,
- Companies owned and managed by men and women.

At this level, 3 subsectors / sectors will be analysed (a total of 6 subsectors) and compared using the comparison matrix tools described below. In terms of selection of the subsectors, a deliberate choice that was made by the research team was to select as subsector of agriculture, the agro-food. This choice was motivated first by the fact that the work is on the value chain but also for convenience as it was too complicated to take other agriculture's subsectors such as the fishing industry for instance, or even oleiculture, although the latter can be included also as the agro-food sub-sector under industry since both involve a transformation process.

Indeed, in most countries, including in the ones covered by this study, the food and beverage industry are under the supervision of the Ministry of industry however, for practical reasons with regards to the VC we have chosen the agro-food as a subsector of Agriculture since it spans from production to processing-transformation and finally commercialisation.

- *Criteria for selecting the Value chains*

Value Chain selection is the first step in the value chain design project; It requires applying the core principles that are vital for this step:

- 1) Significant breadth and depth of impact,
- 2) Sustainability, 3) development of markets system and,
- 3) End-market-driven.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ <https://www.meda.org/market-systems-publications/the-care-meda-e-course-on-market-analysis-and-value-chain-project-design/492-vc-project-design-guide-step-2-value-chain-selection/file>

In the guidelines published by GIZ in cooperation with ILO and other agencies, the 4 criteria of the Value Chains selection and dimensions of values chain/sustainable development are:

- Economic,
- Environmental,
- Social and,
- Institutional.¹¹⁹

Figure 4 - Value Chain dimensions¹²⁰



This methodology was developed by GIZ and the ILO with the objective of standardising a tool that allows projects and programmes to select one or more value chains according to predefined criteria that are closely linked to the objectives/results sought by the projects and programmes. For the purpose of this project, the matrix has been reviewed to propose the herewith matrix inspired/adapted from the GIZ approach to only take into consideration the 3 essential dimensions, namely:

- *Economic dimension*: the economic dimension is the first criteria to consider. In the broadest sense, the goal is economic growth - producing more goods and services and making them available to a large number of people. It focuses on the potential for market growth, job creation for men and women, comparative advantage and added value.
- *Gender dimension* and social innovation: this criteria feeds into the strategic considerations and options for gender-sensitive value chain development. The gender analysis helps to identify the reasons behind the gender gaps and constraints. This covers a wide range of issues such as equity, equality, access to and control of resources by men and women and the benefits of collaboration between value chain actors.

¹¹⁹ Guidelines for Value Chain Selection: integrating economic, environmental, social and institutional. GIZ in collaboration with ILO and others <https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---edemp/---empent/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms416392.pdf>

¹²⁰ Image credit to Guidelines for Value Chain Selection: integrating economic, environmental, social and institutional. GIZ in collaboration with ILO and others

- *Institutional dimension*: Institutional aspects refer to the ‘enabling environment’, such as favourable policy and regulatory environment, by public, private and other relevant stakeholders conducive to value chain development. It often forms a "pragmatic" but also key condition for successful value chain interventions. This enabling environment can facilitate or hinder (green and inclusive) economic development.

In addition to adapting the number of dimensions, their weighting in the value chain selection matrix was re-evaluated since the total number of criteria was reduced to three. Indeed, this tool is based on the assessment of the information collected (qualitative and quantitative data) for each dimension, which comprises a series of questions that are also assessed according to their importance with a percentage that relates to each dimension (the total of the percentages of the questions equals 100% in relation to the dimension). The scoring of the answers allows an assessment of the different questions asked in each dimension.

The following table details the sub-criteria and research questions that have been developed for each selection criterion. These questions guided the research team through the various stages of the literature review and the field. In the GIZ/ILO framework, the four dimensions are often seen as distinct, with the economic dimension generally being favoured. However, for the purpose of our study, the three selected dimensions are interrelated and all need to be taken into account to achieve sustainable economic development. In this context since the tool is based on a score weighting:

- A weight of 40% will be adopted for the economic dimension,
- 40% for the dimension of gender and social innovation and,
- 20% for the institutional dimension criterion.

The answers to the questions will be supported through the preparation of a bibliographic search providing justifications for the rating for each criterion. Although each criterion can be weighted and scored, the guidelines and tools presented take a qualitative approach, with comparisons based mainly on qualitative data. This is also due to the frequent absence of quantitative data, especially on the topic and region selected.

Scoring the different dimensions according to certain criteria makes it possible to assess, compare and prioritise value chains on the basis of the bibliographic search extracted from available studies, facts and statistics. However, while it is preferable to compare sectors and value chains on the basis of sound statistics and data, value chain selection is not a mathematical exercise.

Table 12 - Gender Sensitive Value Chain Matrix

Key Selected & Additional Criteria	Questions	Weight	Score	Weighted score	Underlying data for score
I	Economic dimension	40%			
1	Market demand outlook (local and / or export)	What is the economic weight and the added value of the value chain?			
		What are the prospects for market growth?			
2	Comparative advantage of	Is it possible to substitute local productions for imports?			

	production. Level of competitiveness (compared to competing producers)	What are the unit production costs against the benchmark? Can the product be offered to the buyer / consumer at attractive prices?				
II	Gender and social innovation dimension		40%			
3	Prospects for the integration of women	Do women's have a (possible/ important) function in the VC? If so, specify the groups and functions / roles.				
		Is the number of women active / employed in the VC relatively high?				
		Do women exercise control over equipment, goods and sales to the final client?				
		What are the obstacles preventing women from accessing productive resources and economic activities?				
4	Social Innovation potential	Is the VC characterised by the presence of shared roles and integration between actors of the chain, consistently with a social innovation approach?				
III	Institutional Dimension		20%			
5	Promotion policies and regulation of the sector exist and are in force	Are (promotional) policies and regulations for the sector in place and are they implemented / enforced?				
		Are the public authorities providing tangible support or can we hope for such support? If so, describe and provide evidence of this support.				
6	Shape of local culture in terms of civic engagement and collective action	Are there donors/investors available to collaborate in the VC, for instance being involved in fundraising activities?				
		To what extent is the non-profit sector present and actionable in the VC?				
		Are chain actors open to discussion and cooperation? Why?				
		Are private-public-non-profit networks in place, or can they be activated? If so, describe the role they play.				
		Do VC players share a common culture/common values in terms of civic engagement and collective action (with a focus on women's inclusion)?				

The scoring is done on the basis of the interpretation of the answers (while comparing the different value chains through a horizontal reading) for each question at the level of the matrix. Scoring a particular subsector or value chain according to the sub-criteria is done using scores between 1 and 4, with the following scale, from 1 being the worst to 4 being the best:

1 = very low/very bad

2 = low / bad - below average

3 = acceptable/ moderate - above average

4 = good / high

Overall subsector score =

% Economic dimension X (total scores each time multiplied by % question)
+ % Gender and social innovation dimension X (total scores each time multiplied by % question)
+ % Institutional dimension X (total scores each time multiplied by % question).

The overall score for each value chain corresponds to the formula below noting that, in the end we get overall score for each value chain out of a maximum score of 4. The scoring of each subsector corresponds to the performance on the 3 dimensions (Economic, Gender & social inclusion and Institutional dimension). Noting that the highest the score the highest probability for the country to succeed in the subsector. Most importantly, the GSVCA matrix allows an in-country analysis, in the sense that it provides a potential performance indicator of one VC against another considering the various dimensions; it cannot be compared across countries.

3.6. Operational methodology

The objective of the project "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in the MENA Region to Enter Business and Trade Markets on an Equal Footing with Men" is to create an enabling environment for the promotion and integration of women entrepreneurs into business and trade markets.

With this objective in mind, since the project focuses on women entrepreneurs, we have deliberately chosen to survey different sectors reflecting the presence of women entrepreneurs in 3 different economic sectors and their respective subsectors:

- The agricultural sector and more precisely the agri-food subsector
- The light industry sector: we excluded the heavy industries which are in the majority owned by the State, our focus was on the textiles subsector
- The services sector with a focus on an innovative subsector which is information and communication technologies.

Following the initial hypothesis of comparing different subsectors, the value chain selection matrix tool as detailed earlier, was chosen. Thus, the choice of dimensions and their weighting in the value chain selection matrix within the framework of the project is based on the objectives sought by the project through the selection of a value chain that presents the following criteria:

- *The economic dimension (40%)* with market growth prospects for the value chain. Indeed, the choice had to be made on the economic weight (economic contribution in the country, job creation -to have companies generating employment-, market growth, competitive companies).
- *The social and inclusion gender dimension (40%)* to assess how the presence of women entrepreneurs reflected is reflected in the value chain, in order to define their role and their access to and control of productive resources but also the possibilities of collaboration between the actors in the value chain.
- *The environmental dimension* has not been integrated into this matrix as there is no relation to the objectives of the project which focuses on different subsectors. This dimension could unintentionally orient the selection towards subsectors with less environmental impact, even

though this is not an objective of the project. Indeed, the categories of this dimension, i.e. natural resources, population growth and consumption, environmental degradation and climate change, although relevant from a gender perspective, are in themselves areas of specific interest that could have weighed down the process and content and thus truncated the results, taking them away from the initial objective.

- *The institutional dimension*: the weighting of this dimension has been reduced to (20%) because the project focuses on detecting the weakness of the support to the value chain on the one hand and to women entrepreneurs on the other hand.

3.7. Steps and techniques to be used

There are three key phases to conducting a Gender Responsive Value Chain Analysis:

- i. Examine and describe the different types and extent of men's and women's participation in value chain activities.
- ii. Evaluate how both men's and women's positions in the value chain can be improved without losing competitiveness.
- iii. Identify ways to optimise the benefits that men and women gain from their involvement in the chain.

Data collection is a key step in conducting a Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis: It is made through desk review and interviews with the stakeholders. It will allow identification of actors in each segment/link in the value chain: this step will consider the available data and will focus on the following elements:

- Description of the value chain (economic and social importance, to also include a gender analysis),
- Importance of actors in the value chain (micro, meso- and macro level),
- Preliminary PESTEL and SWOT analysis of the development of the sector to deepen the understanding of the functioning of the value chain.

A SitAn is a systematic collection and evaluation of past and present economic, political, social, and technological data. It aims at:

- 1) Identification of internal and external forces that may influence the organisation's performance and choice of strategies, and,
 - 2) Assessment of the organisation's current and future strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. For that purpose, preliminary PESTEL/ PEST analysis and SWOT analysis¹²¹ of the development of the sector are necessary to deepen the understanding of the functioning of the value chain.
- *The analysis of the GSVCA*

The Pestel/Pest Analysis is an acronym for a tool used to identify the macro (external) forces facing an organisation. The letters stand for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and

¹²¹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/situation-analysis.html>

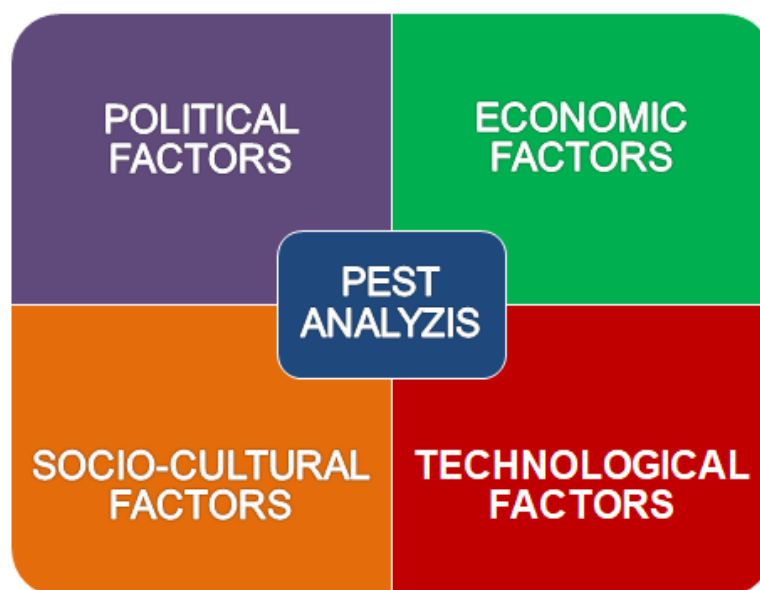
Legal. Depending on the organisation, it can be reduced to PEST or some areas can be added (e.g. Ethical).¹²²

Figure 5 - PESTEL analysis



A **PEST analysis** is a business measurement tool. **PEST** is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors, which are used to assess the market for a business or organisational unit.

Figure 6 - PEST analysis



¹²² <https://blog.oxfordcollegeofmarketing.com/2016/06/30/pestel-analysis/>

Table 13 - PESTEL analysis questions

Criteria	Description
Politics	What policy is applied to the value chain? Is there a strategy applied to the value chain?
Economic	What are the achievements of the value chain and their contribution to GDP?
Social	A gender dimension is analysed in the sector from the desk review
Technological	What technology is applied to the sector in terms of availability in each country?
Environmental	What is the impact of the value chain on the environment
Legal	What regulations apply to the value chain?

The *SWOT analysis* is a simple but useful framework for analysing the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that it can face. It helps focus on the strengths, minimize threats, and take the greatest possible advantage of available opportunities.

Figure 7 - SWOT analysis



- *The Scope of Work*

- ▶ **Phase 1: Prepare the Scope of Work/SOW**

Regardless of whether the assessment/analysis is commissioned or lead by the organisation/unit, it is important to prepare a scope of work (SOW) with a clear purpose and detailed research questions:

- 1) Select and describe the gender related issue.
- 2) Determine the factors to be taken into consideration to undertake the situation analysis,
- 3) Define the objective/s of the to be conducted assessment/analysis,

- 4) Propose the assessment & analysis approach and related methods and tools – and they are proposed – in relation with the selected gender issue including the list of needed data (VCA and gender data),
- 5) Precise the expected results/findings.

► **Phase 2: Conduct a SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis is an audit tool for the organisation, in this case it has to be adapted to the VC and its environment. It is the first stage in the planning process that focuses on key issues.

▪ *Purpose of the SWOT Analysis*

- Clearly determine the comparative advantages by identifying its strengths-weaknesses and the existing opportunities-threats in the context of Development in general and the issues that determine its realization in the context of the GSVCA.

Figure 8 - Detailed SWOT analysis



▪ *The Process*

- 1) Considering the selected Value Chains and methodology prepared in phase 1, conduct a SWOT analysis exercise to assess the internal factors (strengths/weaknesses) and the external factors (opportunities and threats),
- 2) To make the exercise easier and ensure an accurate analysis, contextualise the exercise in each sector and country,
- 3) Simple rules for a successful SWOT Analysis:
 - Being aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation or the VCs in this context,
 - Distinguish between what your organisation is today and what it might be in the future,
 - Be always specific and thus avoid the “grey” (between dog and wolf),

- Think in relation to your competition: better or worse than ...
- Make it short and simple: avoid complexity and too much analysis.

3.8. The analysis and appraisal process under the GSVCA

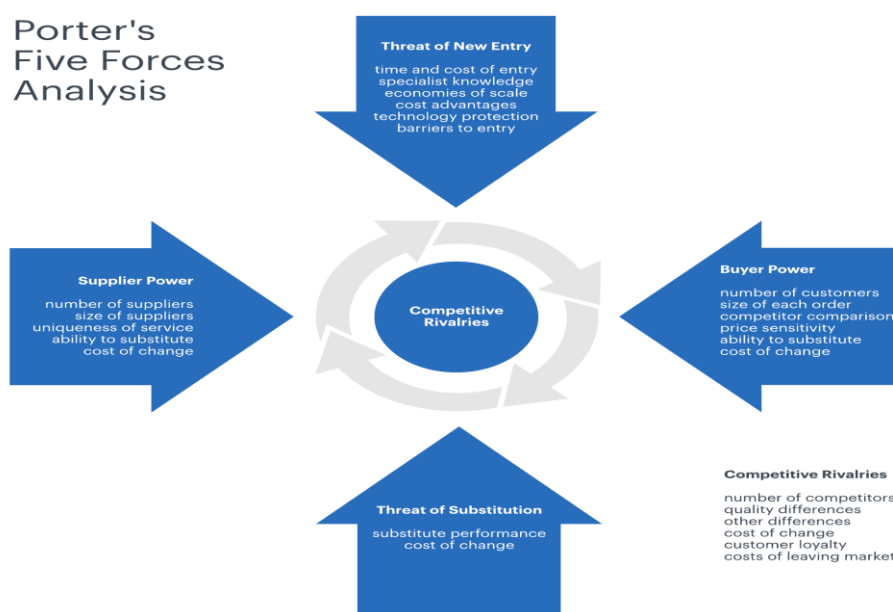
All quantitative & qualitative data – primary and secondary – were collected and analysed to be translated into evidences focusing on initial findings and conclusions to be checked and validated per component and dimension of the whole process. This phase will focus on stakeholder’s assessment and analysis and have to identify constraints and challenges, determine gender inequalities and gaps and assess capacity and resources’ needs towards priorities’ selection at the level of the SMEs and women entrepreneurs themselves.

Opportunities and main barriers that women experience when trying to engage in, and benefit from, economic market opportunities have been also identified. At this stage the second and third step of the gender sensitive value chain analysis were implemented.

Step 1: Evaluate how both men’s and women’s positions in the value chain can be improved without losing competitiveness: The assessment of the actors in the value chain will be based on the analysis of the competitiveness of companies, it will be done through Porter's Five Forces as a framework for analysing a company's competitive environment.

Porter’s Five Forces framework was developed by Harvard's Michael Porter using concepts from industrial organisation economics to analyse five interacting factors critical for an industry to become and remain competitive: industry competition, threat of new entrants, threat of substitutes, bargaining power of buyers and bargaining power of suppliers.¹²³

Figure 9 - Porter's Five forces analysis



¹²³ Value Chain Selection <https://www.marketlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/value-chain-selection> Marketlinks, USAID

The number and power of a company's competitive rivals, potential new market entrants, suppliers, customers, and substitute products influence a company's profitability for the identification and description of the following elements:

- *Entry barriers*: what barriers are imposed (legal, technological, know-how, etc.)
- *Suppliers*: what are relationship with suppliers in the value chain and how the actor ensures its supply?
- *Customers*: who are the customers and what relationship the actor has with them?
- *Substitute products*: the existence of a substitute product which can affect the profitability,
- *Level of competition*: this involves assessing the level of competition between players in the value chain.

This analysis is based on semi-structured interviews (6 actors with business men and women of the selected subsector / value chain) and focus group (10 actors from private and public sectors) with the actors of the value chain (men and women).

Step 2: Qualitative data and the evidence from the interviews and FG will be synthesized into a note that will make possible to assess and define the opportunities and development challenges required by the actors in each value chain.

Step 3: Presentation of results during the meeting with partner and stakeholders to present the result of findings on the Value chain.

Step 4: Outline of the analysis report: The last step corresponds to the preparation of regional reports on the analysis of gender sensitive value chains in each region.

Step 5: Due to the richness of the collected data and information, it was decided to produce also Country Profiles /National reports.

Section II: The reality of the field

The guidelines were adapted and followed as the new standards, some unexpected additional limitations emerged during this first year of the project and this could best be described as "COVID fatigue" including or perhaps even a plus with the target group. Indeed, the change that no one expected or would have imagined, even in the early stages of the COVID 19 pandemic and after the lockdown and its lifting, was in the duration of the effects and their intensity. The most obvious negative impact was on attitudes and behaviors in general, but also and especially on the way of working. Because of this, and despite the team's best efforts, the project implementation was considerably delayed.

1. The initial plan

The first methodology implemented at the start of the mission as detailed in this chapter was based on the following elements and steps to be observed in the chronological order as set below:

- 1) Mapping of public and NGO structures and public/private enterprises in the agriculture, light industries and services sectors. At this stage the research team identified the subsectors for study as follows:

- a. Agriculture sector with the subsector: Agri-food industries,
 - b. Light industries sector with the subsector: Textiles and garment,
 - c. Services sector with the ICT subsector.
- 2) *Literature review* of the situation and status of women with special attention to women entrepreneurs in each country.
 - 3) *Rapid assessment*: in each country, a questionnaire was supposed to be carried out with 12 companies in the three subsectors (agri-food, textiles and ICT) at a rate of 4 companies per subsector (while respecting the sex-disaggregation of 2 men and 2 women). It consists of several parts. As already described, the first part is designed to capture data on the personal characteristics of the respondents (such as gender, age, education, previous experience in creating or managing a social enterprise, motivation, etc.), as well as on the general characteristics of the enterprise (such as its type, size in terms of number of employees, ownership structure, year of establishment, economic activity sector, etc.). The other part focuses on identifying constraints and challenges, determining gender inequalities and gaps, and assessing capacity and resource needs for priority setting at the level of SMEs and women entrepreneurs themselves. The opportunities and key barriers that women face when trying to engage in and benefit from economic opportunities were also to be identified. In addition, access to finance and constraints for social enterprises, the role of innovation in the business life cycle, the influence of different categories of stakeholders on business decision-making and entrepreneurial capital. Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 was a crosscutting category.
 - 4) *Selection of a value chain*: a decision matrix was developed based on three dimensions (economic, gender & social inclusion and institutional). This matrix is fed from the literature search to select a common value chain for each region.
 - 5) *Deepen the gender-sensitive value chain analysis*: This phase assesses the competitiveness and performance of value chains in each selected subsector and identifies actual or potential barriers and opportunities for women and men that may be shaped by custom, law and institutional structure. Thus, this step is based on an interview with 15 private companies and public value chain actors in order to set up the PESTEL and SWOT.
 - 6) *Validation of the gender-sensitive value chain analysis and proposal for improvement*: the final stage of the field research is planned on the basis of 3 focus groups with the selected value chain actors
 - 7) *Reporting*: the reporting phase will involve the elaboration of a report per sub-region and a regional synthesis report.

The mission, who in reality started in January 2021 allowed the validation of the methodology by more than 60 stakeholders and partners during a virtual seminar, was confronted with many obstacles. Indeed, the lack of collaboration from women and men entrepreneurs, non-governmental professional organisations (e.g. Employers) and trade unions representing economic enterprises in each country, the lack of access to relevant information for the development of the database of private enterprises (mapping of private enterprises) as well as the impact of COVID-19 particularly

with the lack of reactivity of stakeholders either from public or private enterprises experiencing economic difficulties, were a strong bottleneck to the project requiring adjustments at every step.

2. Challenges encountered

A number of challenges and limitations were recognized, highlighted and thought of upstream allowing for adjustments. Initially, the work was adapted to the reality of the field as it was more realistic to have a small sample. Yet even this small sample ended up being too much in the COVID-19 pandemic context, even although at the launch in January 2021, all stakeholders were committed to supporting the implementation of the project work package and research.

At the start of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, adjustments were made to shift to online meetings, whether internal project team meeting or with stakeholders. It was understood from the get-go and classified as a risk hypothesis that the main obstacles would be the fact that it would not be possible to organize a technical training meeting for the team, which would have allowed to harmonize the approach and to test the tools outside of the project team. Would testing have occurred, issues around the tools would have risen. As an example, and despite having taken all the necessary precautions to develop the questionnaire that went back and forth between the experts and the project team, to ensure that the data would be captured and various iterations, the respondents ended up finding the questionnaire to be too long. During the interview process a number of participants requested for the questionnaire to be sent via mail and they seldom, to say never replied to it.

Added to the difficulties in accessing information generating a fairly long research time, there was a lack of interest from companies in conducting interviews and responding to the project questionnaires as well as limited availability to conduct focus groups that would have allowed to confront the research results and bring more recommendations in relation to the support needed for the development of the value chain. Despite continuous communication efforts,¹²⁴ the research team did not receive the feedback they were entitled to expect from the organisations and especially from the women participating in both the profiling and rapid assessment (challenges and obstacles to determine needs), including during the lockdown which jeopardized the GSVCA and had a negative impact on the progress of the implementation as a whole.

This situation is something nobody would ever have expected.

3. Mitigating measures: a revised methodology

While respecting the scientific aspects of the research and with the objective of providing relevant results, changes of the methodological approach initially designed by the research team were agreed upon. First a writing workshop was held in Tunis in July 2021, where the project team agreed that coming together and working face to face despite COVID-19 would allow for improved communications, more clarifications and to take and agree upon mitigating measures to ensure the implementation of the work plan and guarantee the production of harmonized deliverables in accordance with project objectives.

¹²⁴ CAWTAR counts a large network (i.e. @NGED) and with the first phase of the “Gender & Trade” project the team developed a substantial contact list

3.1. The desk review

In terms of desk review and situation analysis, no changes were to be made. To allow for comparable data, the situation analysis was based in the four domains assessed by the World Economic Forum in the latest Global Gender Gap Report¹²⁵ globally and in the MENA region. Other source indicators and documents (World Bank, UN Women, ILO...) were referenced to ensure the most updated data inclusion in the report.

3.2. The Mapping

With regard to mapping, it was noted that finding certain elements online, to name the easiest ones, such as contacts (address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses) of public institutions, ended up being more difficult than expected given lack of open source data. Consequently, a methodological choice was taken to have a smaller sample to focus on quality research. Given the difficulties and challenges, it was felt more realistic to map 50 companies in each country in the three sectors, namely agriculture, light manufacturing, and services. For the private sector, there is a general lack of information about women entrepreneurs on the internet. Notably, most of them do not have a website often preferring social media with a tendency to choose Instagram over Facebook. One hypothesis and reason mentioned perhaps being the fact that Instagram allows the use of pseudonyms versus real identity.

3.3. The Rapid Assessment

In order to assess the situation and working conditions of businesswomen a questionnaire targeting a number of businessmen and women selected from the map list, was developed with the following sections:

- Section A: Personal information
- Section B: Business Information
- Section C: Market Access
- Section D: Catalysts
- Section E: Barriers to Entrepreneurship (Start-up and Development)
- Section F: The Impact of the Health Crisis, COVID-19 disease and the Pandemic
- Section H: Assessing gaps and needs

The Rapid Assessment was supposed to target the 3 sectors as a whole: agriculture, light industries and services. When the difficulties increased, the research team decided to conduct the rapid assessment by subsector, two additional questionnaires were developed. The sample remained unchanged, for each country, 12 companies in the 3 subsectors (agrifood, textiles and ICT) at a rate of 4 companies per subsector (while respecting the gender desegregation 2 men and 2 women). Ideally, the rapid assessment would have been done in person, however with the lockdowns and restrictions the questionnaires had to be sent out the business owners.

In **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco** and **Tunisia**, interviews were conducted directly which allowed for the gathering of the data. However, in **Algeria, Jordan**, since participants were not responding to direct

¹²⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021>

calls, the questionnaires were distributed so that people would fill them and return them to the research team. Moreover, given the challenges to get inputs/responses from stakeholders for these two countries, decision has been made to set a deadline in order to avoid incurring further delays (end of July, 2021). Unfortunately, **Jordan** did not return any questionnaire and **Algeria** returned two.

3.4. The Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis

The value chain decision matrix was fed by a literature review enriched by the data collected during the previous step (Gender-Sensitive Value Chain questionnaire). This step led to the selection of the common value chain shared by the six countries.

In a first step (writing workshop, July 2021), the sub-regional findings and questions that emerged from the results of the stakeholder mapping and the gender-sensitive value chain/GSVCA analysis were reviewed, completed and consolidated.

As a reminder, the three selected dimensions, (economic, gender and social and institutional innovation), were applied and informed by the literature search and data collection, which allowed for a well-documented decision matrix for the selection of gender-sensitive value chains.

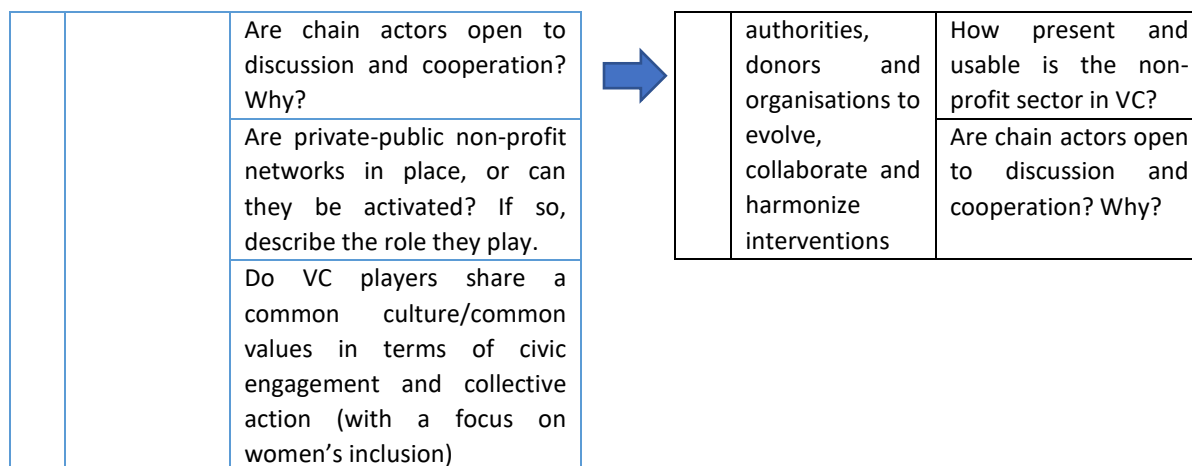
The institutional dimension is made of 2 sub-criteria, namely:

- First sub-criterion: Policies to promote and regulate the sector exist and are in force;
- Second sub-criterion: Form of local culture in terms of civic engagement and collective action.

This second sub-criterion had to be readapted given that the data needed to be harmonized in the 6 countries due to the lack of availability of data but also given the lack of feedback from the private sector’s actors in some countries. Thus, the sub-criterion was readapted shifting from “Form of local culture in terms of civic engagement and collective action” to “willingness of actors in the chain, public authorities, donors and organisations to evolve, collaborate and harmonise interventions” as follows:

III	Institutional Dimension	
5	Promotion policies and regulation of the sector exist and are in force	Are (promotion policies and regulations for the sector in place and are they implemented /enforced?
		Are the public authorities providing tangible support? If so, describe and provide evidence of this support
6	Shape of local culture in terms of civic engagement and non-collective action	Are there donors/investors available to collaborate in the VC, for instance being involved in fundraising activities?
		To what extent is the non-profit sector present and actionable in the VC?

III	Institutional Dimension	
5	Promotion policies and regulation of the sector exist and are in force	Are (promotion policies and regulations for the sector in place and are they implemented /enforced?
		Are the public authorities providing tangible support? If so, describe and provide evidence of this support
6	Willingness of chain actors, public	Which donors/aid organisations are ready to collaborate?



The questions used for the decision matrix focused on donor collaboration for value chain development, the presence of non-profit actors and finally the inter-actor cooperation of the value chain links.

3.5. The Focus Group Discussions

Once the analysis of the GSVCA—achieved, and the subsector identified, Focus Group Discussions were organised with actors involved in the corresponding field in order to deepen the gender-sensitive value chain analysis and related findings (conclusions and recommendations). It was agreed from the beginning that if there were some questions that were unanswered, they would have been raised during the subsequent interviews conducted during the Rapid Assessment but also during the FGDs that will follow the GSVCA exercise that if there were some questions that were unanswered, the questions would have been raised during the subsequent interviews conducted during the Rapid Assessment but also during the FGDs that will follow the GSVCA exercise.

FGDs took place with actors (ten- to twelve participants) of a selected VC in the sense that all business owners and entrepreneurs targeted by the FGDs were actors of the same subsector. The analysis and the FGDs have been done on the basis of the Porter framework in an aim to identify the differences between women and men. It helped understand the challenges these men and women were facing in terms of competitiveness-and of markets.

Gathering their point of views and opinions on difficulties they are living as individuals and as a women and men group, allowed for hypotheses to be confirmed, conclusions to be drawn and recommendations to be set. However, to optimise the time under the project, the focus group has been organised bringing together public actors and private companies (at least 10 people). During this focus group, the findings of analysis of the chain (PESTEL, SWOT) were presented as well as the different hypotheses of obstacles, potentialities and improvement of access to markets and women's entrepreneurship. Due to the difficulties of the field, only two FGDs were conducted: one in **Tunisia** and one in **Egypt**, both in the ICT sector.

There were virtual discussions with businesspersons in Algeria and face-to-face in Morocco. However, for methodological reasons, the process and content of these discussions cannot be considered as the same of the FGDs conducted after the GSVCA. Indeed, the groups that met were heterogeneous. In Algeria, discussants were from the three sub-sectors and the ICT was the selected

one. In Morocco also, participants did not only represent the agro-food sector, which turned out to be the sector chosen for Morocco, but did include others from the Textiles and ICT sub sectors.

3.6. The Reporting

With regards to the reporting, considering all the data challenges and in an aim to have a harmonized level of information across the target countries the reporting products were adapted. The reporting phase focused on the elaboration of a regional synthesis report and country profiles for each of the countries covered.

The country profiles are developed according to the same framework as the regional report as herewith detailed:

- Introduction
- Part 1: Situation analysis in the MENA region and in the 6 countries specifically,
- Part 2: Methodology and tools developed at inception and reality of the field as well as a summary of the mapping and rapid assessment findings analysis,
- Part 3: the GSVCA findings and analysis,
- Conclusions and recommendations.

They were however adapted as regard to the content but also in relation with the way the methodology was implemented in the field. Indeed the gathering of information in the COVID-19 context proved extremely difficult and **Egypt and Tunisia** were the only two countries where the whole process was followed through from desk review, to mapping, to rapid assessment and GSVCA, selection of subsector (i.e. the ICT sector in both countries) and FGDs actually conducted subsequently.

Section III – Mapping and Rapid Assessment Findings

Results of the mapping and Rapid Assessment are described below with the caveat detailed above.

1. Results of the Mapping

One of the important tasks was to assess in the 6 covered countries the stakeholders and institutions that interfere with and/or influence women entrepreneurs. The output of this exercise allows collecting updated data information to enrich the data base of CAWTAR to be made available to all interested users. In addition, a per country mapping detailing, businesses and private companies with a specific focus on the more concerned or interested in the area of interest i.e. in the sectors selected: Agriculture, Light Industries and Services, has also been conducted, resulting in 6 country mappings of the private sector, as herewith for Egypt.

The type of **institutions and organisations** mapped at country level are:

- Governmental institutions (Ministries, Centres, National Funds and National Banks, etc),
- Civil Society Organisations: (Professional Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Development and Credit Associations, etc.),

- International organisations: United Nations Agencies, EU Bi-lateral Cooperation agencies, USA, Canada, International banks, etc.

At the regional level, stakeholders¹²⁶ and institutions were mapped in the 6 concerned countries with Egypt representing 30 out of the 187 Institutions and Organisations mapped.

Table 14 - Type and number of Institutions and Organisations in Egypt

Egypt	GOs	NGOs	Int./Reg .	Total
	7	8	16	30
TOTAL	63	39	89	187

In terms of stakeholders involved in women and businesses, there are only 7 in Egypt, as opposed to other countries of the project where they are more numerous, these are:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Ministry of Social Solidarity, The National Council of Women, Central Bank of Egypt and Maglees El Shaab (Parliament).

Table 15 - Regional and international Organisations in Egypt

Countries of Interventions	EGYPT
African Development Bank/ADB	✓
Arab Maghreb Union/AMU	
ENDA	
Islamic Development Bank/IDB	✓
French Agency of Development	✓
GIZ	✓
ILO	✓
League of Arab States/LAS	✓
North South Consultants Exchange	✓
Plan International	✓
UNDP	✓
UNIDO	✓
UN Women	✓
USAID	✓
World Bank	✓

As stated above, Covid-19 and its various variants, waves and lockdowns negatively impacted the life and the morale of stakeholders. Shifting all meetings to virtual mode contributed to “Covid fatigue” observed with stakeholders. With regards to Egypt, upon collection of the data on the Mapping, given the lack of information on the internet and the social networks with regards to the different companies mapped under the selected sectors, hundreds of e-mails were sent and an unlimited number of phone calls were made to the companies the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the

¹²⁶ Noting that this number does not include the private sector companies that are in the Rapid Assessment.

Businessmen Associations, and the Businesswomen's Association to request for the missing data, but unfortunately, there was no response.. It was through the support and collaboration with Enroot Development¹²⁷ that data on medium-sized enterprises owners from the three sectors at hand was collected.

A total of 8 Egyptian organisations were mapped as per the below:

Table 16 - Egyptian organisations

Organisation name	Male / Female Owner	Government	Nongovernmenta	Private	Public	Other	National	Field of work
Association for The Development & Enhancement of Women - ADEW	Fe		x			x		Empowering women in the field of economic, social, cultural, health and legal development
Business Foundation for Community Development	M	x				x	x	Education, health and humanitarian projects
General Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce	M	x				x	x	Achieving economic and social development
Egyptian Businessmen Association - EBA	M		x	x		x	x	Economic development
Al Tadamun Microfinance Foundation	F		x			x	x	Increasing the income of women micro-entrepreneurs
National Council for Women	F	x		x		x	x	Egyptian women's rights
Business Women Association in Egypt	F		x		x	x	x	Empowering women and enhancing their contribution to the Egyptian economy
Social Fund for Development (Egypt)	M	x			x		x	Small, medium and micro enterprise development

A total of 15 Egyptian organisations in the field of agriculture were mapped as per the below:

¹²⁷ Enroot is a development consulting firm with a primary focus on fostering economic development through supporting target communities and raising their capabilities. Its experience and scope of activities revolve around the design and implementation of initiatives supporting emerging businesses and entrepreneurship, developing productive clusters and value chains with a focus on less developed regions, and with an emphasis on empowering youth and women. <https://eg.linkedin.com/company/enroot-development>

Table 17 - Egyptian organisations in the field of Agriculture

Organisation name AGRICULTURE	Male / Female Owner	Government	Nongovernmental	Private	Public	Other	International	Local	Regional	National	Field of work
Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	M	x			x					x	Agricultural policies and agrarian reform policies in line with national development plans
Elsindbad for Export	F		x	x			x		x	x	Horticulture and Agriculture.
Abdel Raouf Ayyad Farm	F		x	x			x		x	x	Agriculture
Helal Cactus	F		x	x						x	Agriculture.
Middle East Economic Development	F		x	x			x	x	x	x	Agriculture
4h Cuisine	F		x	x						x	Agriculture
DALLAH MISR	F		x	x				x		x	Agriculture
Elsaied company	F		x	x				x		x	Agriculture
World Bridges Trading Egypt	F		x	x			x	x	x	x	Agriculture
Mom's Food, Relax, & Blendy	F		x	x			x	x			Agriculture
Abu Taleb For Dring & Packing Agricultural Products	F		x	x			x			x	Agriculture
Food Export Council	F	x			x	x				x	Food export
Special Foods International Industry – SFII	F		x	x			x			x	Agriculture
Family Pharmacia	F		x	x			x		x	x	Food & beverage
NOLA BAKERY	F		x	x				x		x	Agriculture

A total of 14 Egyptian organisations in the field of agriculture were mapped as per the below:

Table 18 - Egyptian organisations in the field of Services

Organisation name SERVICES	Male / Female Owner	Government	Nongovernmental	Private	Public	Other	International	Local	Regional	National	Sub-sector
Arabize for Computer Services	F		x	x			x	x		x	ICT and Education
COMMUNICTE	F		x	x			x	x	x	x	N\A
Egysite, IT Specialist Elevating Craft to the level of Art	F		x	x			x		x	x	Services and Technology
Foreign Trade Training Centre	F	x					x		x	x	under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade and Industry "MTI"
Go Global For International Business Development	F		x	x			x	x			Consultancy Firm
Hit Rate, Recruitment & HR Consultancy	F		x	x						x	Consultancy Firm
Jupiter Commz	M		x	x						x	communications firm
TCM EGYPT	F		x	x						x	Marketing services
Mindstore International	M& F		x	x			x	x	x	x	Human Resources Consultant
SAP Software Solutions _ Business Applications and Technology	F		x	x						x	Software Solutions _ Business Applications and Technology
Procurus Egypt for Market Entry Support Services	F		x	x						x	ICT
R&S Management Consultancy	F		x	x			x		x	x	Consultancy Firm
Influence Communications Group	M& F		x	x			x		x	x	Communications service platform
General Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce	M	x					x			x	N\A

2. The Rapid assessment

As stated earlier, the aim of the Rapid Assessment was to select 4 actors per subsector (2 men, 2 women) and meet (face-to-face or virtually) and send them the questionnaire next.

2.1. Presentation of the sample

A set of 13 entrepreneurs, shared between 7 men and 6 women, were contacted during the interviews conducted via virtual platforms. These entrepreneurs are active in different sectors, such

as agriculture (2), services (7) and light industry (4). The majority of entrepreneurs contacted, i.e. 7 (4 men and 3 women) are between the ages of 40 and 49 years old, representing 54% of the total sample. For the other age groups, 30 - 39, and 50 – 59 years old, they equally represent 23% of the total sample. In both groups, women occupy a significant proportion in these age groups.

Figure 10 - Distribution of companies interviewed by gender

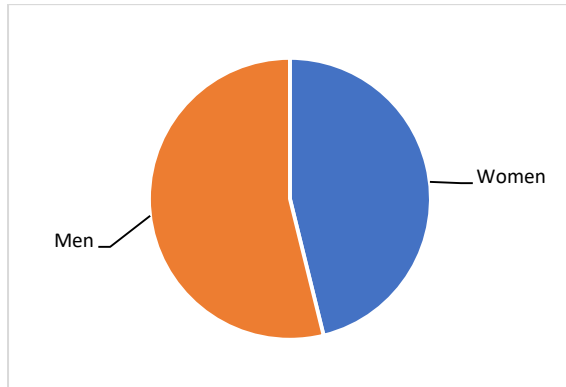
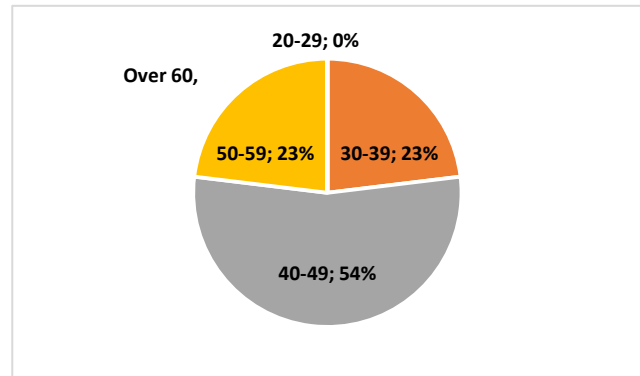


Figure 11 - Distribution of the sample according to the age groups of the Egyptian entrepreneurs interviewed



In terms of the civil status of the entrepreneurs, 12 entrepreneurs are married, divided between six (6) women and six (6) men. All the women interviewed are married with 2 to 3 children. The only single entrepreneur is a man. In terms of academic background, most of these entrepreneurs are university graduates. The female entrepreneurs have either a university degree (two of them) or a post-graduate degree (three of them), one female entrepreneur refrained from answering this question. While the men interviewed are mostly university graduates (five), one of them with a high school degree and another with a post-graduate degree.

Table 19 - Distribution of the sample of entrepreneurs interviewed by academic and professional qualifications, by gender

Sector	Professional Certificate		High School Diploma (Baccalauréat)		University Diploma (undergraduate degree)		Post-graduate Diploma (graduate degree)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture					2			1
Light Industry								1
Services			1		3	2	1	1

In terms of professional experience and background, the women entrepreneurs in our sample were not born into a family or entourage of entrepreneurs, except for one woman who owns a service company and who declared that she had taken over a family business. Moreover, these women have already had professional experience either as employees in a company (two of them) or as management executives (two of them) and only one (1) woman entrepreneur previously managed a company during a period of 4 to 5 years before launching herself into the entrepreneurial world.

The majority of the women's businesses have been in existence for more than 15 years and two (2) women have less than 5 years of entrepreneurial experience. Regarding the men entrepreneurs, we found the opposite situation whereby the majority of them grew up in an entrepreneurial family or have had in their family circle entrepreneurs. They all had professional experiences of more than 10 years before launching their own company, which for the majority have been in existence for less than 14 years with only 1 company with 20 years of existence.

The analysis of the sample of women and men entrepreneurs leads us to reflect on the effect of the family environment on entrepreneurs, but also on the decision-making time required to actually take a leap and launch a business.

The women interviewed who did not grow-up in an entrepreneurial family or in an environment where they interacted with entrepreneurs and who all had professional experience as employees took longer to throw themselves in the entrepreneurial world than the men who had mostly lived in a family environment with entrepreneurs.

In terms of human resources management, the women entrepreneurs interviewed stated that they managed fewer than 40 employees, except in the case of an agricultural business, which had a higher number of employees (approximately 200). Similarly, the businesses managed by men have fewer than 30 employees and only one business employs between 80 and 100 employees in the service sector.

2.2. Analysis of the entrepreneurial process and business management (obstacles and challenges)

The businesses launched, which are the subject of this analysis, are all commercial enterprises. In relation to the mode of ownership of the enterprise, 10 out of the 13 entrepreneurs, men and women, with whom interviews were conducted, created new companies. Only one (1) woman entrepreneur joined her family's project in the agricultural sector.

The access to financing of the company is generally based on self-funded equity and external financing from financial institution or business partnerships. With regard to the financing of their businesses, during the start-up phase, all the entrepreneurs were self-funded, using their own funds as equity contribution, with 1 woman out of these 13 entrepreneurs being financially supported by a family member. In the case of our sample, the external contribution was not mentioned.

In terms of entrepreneurial motivation, the women's responses were mixed. The quest for challenge and personal fulfilment, finding themselves as role models and influencing others were mentioned but also the necessity to find a job or having to bounce back after losing a job. However, men entrepreneurs mentioned they were motivated by the desire for increased wealth.

In terms of entrepreneurial obstacles, women entrepreneurs mentioned the difficulty of balancing professional and family life and the lack of support for women entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of technical training or business management in the start-up phase of their businesses. The male entrepreneurs especially emphasized the difficulties linked to access to markets and access to financing.

Finally, in terms of business management, women entrepreneurs mainly mentioned obstacles related to their understanding of the regulations governing their respective sectors of activity, their

lack of marketing knowledge and access to international trade fairs for market expansion, emphasizing the absence of a network for exchanging information on these opportunities. In addition, a woman entrepreneur in the service sector mainly put forward the difficulty of managing human resources in terms of motivation and employee training to increase their efficiency.

2.3. Market access

The companies interviewed stated that they focus on the local and export markets. In the agricultural sector, 3 companies are focused on the local market but also on the export market, mainly to Russia, the European Union and the Gulf countries. The main barriers to market access for their products are essentially quality of product, trade regulations and price. Indeed, a company led by a woman in the food sector mentioned the difficulty of introducing on the local market, innovative products such as the one developed by her company, the Pretzel, unknown to the Egyptian market. Given the lack of knowledge of the Egyptian consumer of pretzels, major marketing efforts are required to remove this barrier, educate the consumer and introduce the product on the market.

In the industry sector, the 3 companies operating in the textile sub-sector focus on the local market, facing a lack of marketing support and management of their client's solvency. Finally, in the ICT Sector, the 7 companies surveyed market their products on the local market. The perception of barriers to market access is essentially related to the lack of knowledge of the regulations governing potential export markets for their products and the level of competition. Indeed, the interviewed entrepreneurs stated that since there is no market reference price for web developers each freelancer asks for different rates which create competition. In addition, the ICT is sector that faces brain drain with the migration of computer development skills abroad whereby skilled employees will prefer to move abroad. With less development engineers available on the local market, employing qualified employees becomes more difficult and more expensive. Only the ICT sector mentioned the difficulty regarding lack of availability of human resources in terms of quantity and quality especially since the most skilled young computer developers migrate to foreign countries.

Barriers to market access differ from one sector to another depending on the regulations in force for the marketing of a good or service on a potential export market. Most companies do not have a system to have regulatory watch, they are not aware of the updated regulations or of regulatory barriers, both at domestic level and in terms of export. With regard to international norms and standards, companies have a rather weak knowledge of international standards applicable to their product and the quality required to meet international standards.

2.4. The impact of Covid 19

The companies that participated in the questionnaires all reported an impact on their professional activities, mainly due to the restrictions of mobility during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, but also limited access to services essential to their activities, without however giving details or example of issues faced. 2 business owners commented that these impacts affected male and female employees in the same manner and have not observed gendered difference in terms of Covid 19 impact.

On the family level, 3 women and 1 man business owners reported a positive effect of the lockdowns on their family lives, given that they were able to spend more time with their children. On

the other hand, they emphasized the challenge of working from home and the lack of clear separation between work and family time and the difficulty to strike a work/life balance.

On the economic impact of Covid-19, all entrepreneurs were unanimous in recognizing the decline of their sales figures. Some entrepreneurs in the industrial sector even had to close their factories because of the market closure and lack of distribution channels.

As an adaptation measure to the impact of Covid-19, business leaders have tried to maintain jobs by implementing new communication tools (virtual team meetings) but also by reducing the level of production while keeping track of the price of their products and services on the market. As an example, a male IT entrepreneur who reported reducing production quantities by almost half, and reducing exports to countries with high transportation costs and that involved high and payment risks, such as Bangladesh and India. A woman entrepreneur in the same IT sector adopted different mitigating measures by increasing her monitoring of the market and reducing raw material purchases and limiting production level to try to reduce costs as much as possible while maintaining quality to keep a positive sales ratio.

2.5. Support needs of entrepreneurs

During the discussion with the entrepreneurs, the support needs has been identified to improve the development of their businesses and more specifically the access to markets. First, time was spent to understand the situation with regards to access to training. Women entrepreneurs had access to technical trainings related to their respective sectors of activity, business management training and training on new technologies. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to seek training on digital marketing and technical training specific to their line of work.

The analysis based on the questionnaire responses has brought out the following needs for women entrepreneurs:

- Networking with other business owners in a collaborative spirit to exchange information on their field and potential opportunities,
- A better understanding of the regulations governing the company's sector of activity but also a watchful eye to keep the company in compliance with regulatory requirements
- Better access to technical and managerial training
- A better capacity to manage human resources
- Adoption of new technologies in business management such as e-commerce and digital marketing.

In Egypt, during the discussion with the entrepreneurs, it was stressed that the support needs to improve the development of their businesses and more specifically the access to markets. First, time was spent to understand the situation with regards to access to training. Women entrepreneurs had access to technical trainings related to their respective sectors of activity, business management training and training on new technologies. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to seek training on digital marketing and technical training specific to their line of work.

In conclusion, all of these data will be taken up in the next chapter when analyzing the results of the gender-sensitive value chain, with which they will be referenced in a cross-cutting analysis.

Chapter III – Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis

The first step to conducting a Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis is the data collection through the desk review and interviews with the stakeholders. It allows identification of actors in each link in the value chain: this step will consider the available data and will focus on the following elements:

- Description of the value chain (economic and social importance, to also include a gender analysis)
- Importance of actors in the value chain (macro, meso and micro level)
- Preliminary PESTEL and SWOT analysis of the development of the sector to deepen the understanding of the functioning of the value chain.

In addition to the difficulties detailed above, difficulties specific to the data collection phase were encountered in terms of both availability and consistency. Availability of data on the topic at hand in the various countries is extremely limited, not to say scarce. An added layer of complication was due the fact that when available and depending on the sources consulted, the data found was contradictory, further impeding the process.

Section I - State of the Art of the GSVCA

As a reminder, the goal of the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA is to evaluate the competitiveness and performance of a number of Value chains in each selected sector/ sub sector in order to identify real or potential barriers and opportunities for women and men that may be shaped by custom, law, and institutional structure. The matrix, inspired from the GIZ approach and based on a score weighting, takes into consideration the 3 essential dimensions, namely:

- Economic dimension (at 40%),
- Gender dimension and social innovation (at 40%), and,
- Institutional dimension (at 20%).

Table 20 - Summarized GSVCA matrix for Egypt

CRITERIA			Sub-sector 1 Agri-food		Sub-sector 2 Textile		Sub-sector 3 ICT	
ECONOMIC DIMENSION	Weight of the criterion in the total 40%		Score	WS ¹²⁸	Score	WS	Score	WS
Guiding questions		Weight of the guided question in the total criterion	Score	WS ¹²⁸	Score	WS	Score	WS
Market demand outlook (local and / or export)	Economic weight and added value of the sector	25%	4	0,4	2	0,2	2	0,2
	Prospects for market growth	25%	2	0,2	2	0,2	4	0,4
Comparative advantage of	Possibility to substitute local productions for imports	25%	2	0,2	2	0,2	2	0,2

¹²⁸ WS stands for Weighted Score. The WS is the weighted score in relation to the total of the matrix (score X % of the question in the dimension X the percentage of the dimension)

production Level of competitiveness (compared to competing producers)	Unit production costs vs. the baseline Attractive price offering to the buyer/consumer	25%	2	0,2	1	0,1	2	0,2
TOTAL ECONOMIC DIMENSION		100%		1,00		0,70		1,0
GENDER AND SOCIAL DIMENSION	Weight of the criterion in the total 40%		Score	WS	Score	WS	Score	WS
Prospects for the integration of women	Women possible function in the VC (groups and functions / roles specified)	30%	2	0,24	4	0,48	4	0,48
	Relative number of women active / employed in the VC (Groups specified)	20%	1	0,08	3	0,24	4	0,32
	Women exercise control over equipment, goods and sales revenue	20%	1	0,08	1	0,08	4	0,32
	Obstacles preventing women from accessing productive resources and economic activities	20%	1	0,08	1	0,08	4	0,32
Potential for social innovation	VC characterized by the presence of shared roles and integration between chain actors, consistent with a social innovation approach	10%	1	0,04	1	0,04	3	0,12
TOTAL INCLUSION		100%		0,52		0,92		1,56
INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION	Weight of the criterion in the total 20%		Score	WS	Score	WS	Score	WS
Promotion policies and regulation of the sector exist and are in force	Policies and regulations for the sector in place and implemented / enforced	30%	1	0,06	2	0,12	4	0,24
	Public authorities provide tangible support	30%	4	0,24	2	0,12	3	0,18
Willingness of chain actors, public authorities, donors and organizations to evolve, collaborate and harmonize interventions	Donors / aid organizations are ready to collaborate	10%	4	0,24	1	0,06	4	0,24
	A present and usable non-profit sector in VC	10%	4	0,08	4	0,08	4	0,08
	Chain actors open to discussion and cooperation	20%	4	0,16	1	0,04	1	0,04
TOTAL ECOSYSTEM		100%		0,62		0,38		0,62
TOTAL (maximum score = 4 points)				2.14		2		0.62

1. Criterion 1: Economic dimension: Weight of the criterion in the total 40%

a) Market demand outlook (local and / or export)

i) Guiding questions: What are the economic weight and the added value of the sector? Considering that this criterion is evaluated through 4 guided questions the weighted % of each question is set at 25%.

(1) For the **Sub-sector Agri-food**: Score= 4; Weighted Score= 0.4

The agro-industry sector is a key contributor to Egypt's GDP, employment and exports. Agriculture accounted for 21.3% of employment and 11.4% of GDP in 2019. Food exports accounted for 15.0% of merchandise exports.¹²⁹ Egypt has a dynamic market of some 88 million consumers, one of the largest in Africa and the Middle East. There are 5,809 business establishments operating in the agri-food sector, with a total capital of EGP 9.6 billion. Egypt's exports of agricultural products and processed foods totalled US\$4.9 billion in 2013, accounting for almost 13.8% of total exports. The country's main trading partners are the Arab countries and the European Union. Egypt's exports consist mainly of cooked cheese products, processed sugar, aromatic oils, resins, non-olive oils, juices, concentrates and frozen vegetables. Despite this, the country remains a net importer of agricultural and food products. The main products imported in large quantities are cereals, meat, vegetable oils, vegetables and seafood.¹³⁰

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

The Textiles and clothing/TC sector is the second industrial sub-sector in Egypt after agriculture and the agri-food sector. The TC sector plays an important role in Egypt's economy, notably their contribution to employment, value added, and foreign exchange earnings. It accounts for about 3.5% of GDP, 34% of industrial production and 14% of Egypt's total exports. TC enterprises account for one-fifth of all industrial sector firms, being the largest single employer with over 400,000 workers, that is almost a quarter of the industrial labour force.¹³¹ In 2008 the industry accounted for 26.4% of industrial production with a total value added of LE 33.5 billion, and close to 10% of the country's exports.¹³² ¹³³ In 2017, textiles accounted for 60% of the total value of production, with clothing accounting for the remaining share. The textile value chain in Egypt, mainly focused on cotton products, is underperforming its peers and competitors. It is highly dependent on imported inputs, reflecting weak vertical integration and a lack of upstream integration.¹³⁴

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

The ICT sector is a key driver in the Egyptian economy. It built over the last two decades a strong governance model and sustainable institutions for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.¹³⁵ The real growth rate of the ICT sector was 12% in 2009-10 and its contribution to GDP was 4%. Employment increased with a growth rate of almost 4%. As of June 2010, the 3,726 operating companies in the sector employed 192,150 people.¹³⁶ The GDP generated from the ICT sector reached 80 billion Egyptian pounds in the fiscal year 2017/2018 with an increase of 14% if compared to the previous year. Around 1 000 new companies were established in 2018 with a total capital of 976 million Egyptian pounds.¹³⁷ The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector in

¹²⁹ World Bank Group, 2020

¹³⁰ Coface, 2016

¹³¹ Industrial Development Authority 2009 quoted in Population Council, Gender and work in the MENA Region: Poverty, Job Quality and Labour Market Dynamics. Working paper series, No 13, 13 June 2011

¹³² Ministry of State for Economic Development (MOED) 2008 quoted in Population Council, Gender and work in the MENA Region: Poverty, Job Quality and Labour Market Dynamics. Working paper series, No 13, 13 June 2011

¹³³ International Trade Centre 2008 quoted in Population Council, Gender and work in the MENA Region: Poverty, Job Quality and Labour Market Dynamics. Working paper series, No 13, 13 June 2011

¹³⁴ World Bank Group, 2020

¹³⁵ Dr. Maged Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019

<https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

¹³⁶ Women and Work in Egypt

¹³⁷ The media center, Egyptian cabinet, 2019 quoted in Dr. Maged Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019 <https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

Egypt maintained its robust position, with a growth rate higher than Egypt's overall level of GDP growth, equivalent to 15.2% in fiscal year 2019/2020. Its contribution to the GDP has increased to 4.4% in fiscal year 2019/2020 compared to 3.5% in 2018/2019. Total investments in the sector increased by 35% in 2019/2020 and reached \$3.5 billion.¹³⁸

ii) Guiding questions: What are the prospects for market growth? Considering that this criterion is evaluated through 4 guided questions the weighted % of each question is set at 25%.

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

The agri-food industries constitute a strong development challenge with many SMEs, employing 250,000 people. It is a promising sector with the future development of distribution systems and population growth. Its main challenges concern mainly the marketing of quality products, the upgrading of production facilities to international standards, the development of services and of exports, the packaging industry and the production under license of branded foreign products. Egypt is interested in attracting foreign direct investment in this sector.¹³⁹

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

Egyptian textile exports lag behind other countries such as Turkey, Jordan or Vietnam, and have not reached their potential in markets such as the EU. Overall, Egyptian textile exports in 2018 amounted to US\$3.2 billion, with clothing accounting for 50% of the share, but they only constituted about 0.3% of global exports. Textile exports to the EU are also either static (clothing segment since 2014) or declining (cotton), despite shorter delivery times and duty-free access.¹⁴⁰

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.4

The Egyptian IT market is positioned for a period of sustained growth in the medium term, 2019-2022, as the economy recovers from the negative shock of the stringent structural economic adjustment measures taken under the IMF programme.¹⁴¹ Egypt is well positioned to become a regional digital hub for the Middle East and Africa. ICT is the core sector of the digital economy which also encompasses the digitalisation of other sectors. With 40.9 million internet users in 2019, Egypt leads the Arab world and is second in Africa, after Nigeria.¹⁴²

b) Comparative advantage of production Level of competitiveness (compared to competing producers)

▪ *Guiding questions: Is it possible to substitute local productions for imports? Considering that this criterion is evaluated through 4 guided questions the weighted % of each question is set at 25%.*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

The high dependence on cereal imports is a structural weakness of the Egyptian food security system. After a year 2013 disrupted by the financial crisis (insufficient foreign currency reserves) which slowed down wheat imports, imports returned to their usual level in 2014 (i.e. around 10 Mt

¹³⁸ <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/egypt-information-and-communications-technology-and-digital-economy>

¹³⁹ French Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-food and Forestry, 2015

¹⁴⁰ World Bank Group, 2020

¹⁴¹ Egypt Information Technology Report Includes 5-year forecasts to 2022

¹⁴² World Bank Group, 2020

per year). Egyptian agri-food imports fell sharply in 2013/2014 (-10% over one year), representing nearly a quarter of total imports. Egypt's food dependency is indeed high in cereals (€2.8bn for wheat, €1.9bn for feed corn), vegetable proteins (€850m for soya and €308m for soya cake), oils and fats (€2.2bn), beef (€582m), sugar (€709m) and fish (€442m).¹⁴³

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

Even rarely, since the 1990s, and particularly during the 2000s, Egypt has managed to increase its exports of higher value-added products, especially clothing, carpets, home textiles and various yarns and textiles. However, the textile trade balance became negative in 2008 due to the increase in imports of consumer products and contributions.¹⁴⁴

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

It is difficult to substitute local productions for imports in ICT. The import of electronic components, for example, increased by almost 40% year-on-year in 2017 and quintupled compared to 2012, with the majority of component imports coming from diodes, transistors and semiconductor devices.¹⁴⁵

ii) Guiding Question: What are the unit production costs compared to the baseline? Can the product be offered to the buyer / consumer at attractive prices? Considering that this criterion is evaluated through 4 guided questions the weighted % of each question is set at 25%.

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

Food prices had risen by 7% since 2006 with an even higher increase for some products: 14% for edible oils and 12% for cereals, including wheat and rice. Dairy prices had simply doubled over the same period. The prices of all basic foodstuffs have shown a staggering increase in recent months. According to the World Food Programme/WFP, since the beginning of 2008, average food prices have risen by 23.5% and the expenditure of an Egyptian household by 50%. Wages, on the other hand, have hardly changed at all. The Egyptian pound has depreciated by 13% against the dollar since the turn of 2016, reducing the purchasing power of households. As Egypt is a net importer of food, its chronic shortage of foreign currency has led to a sharp increase in food prices. Food and beverage prices rose by 33.64% year-on-year in July. As a result, consumers are shifting their purchases to economically priced food.¹⁴⁶

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.1

The products are quite expensive due to rising raw material prices, so Egyptian producers are unable to compete with low-cost foreign producers, especially those from China, and are losing market share at home, as evidenced by the dramatic decline in domestic textile sales. In the four years between 2000 and 2004, domestic producers' sales halved from \$6 billion to \$3 billion, reflecting the fact that foreign competitors are driving Egyptian textile companies out of the domestic market. In 2020, due to the pandemic crisis, 40 % of companies will shift part of their focus to the domestic market. Consumers are switching more to online retail and are choosing more basic products. This

¹⁴³ French Ministry of Agriculture: de l'agroalimentaire et de la forêt

¹⁴⁴ ÖFSE, 2020

¹⁴⁵ Egypt Information Technology Report Includes 5-year forecasts to 2022

¹⁴⁶ La découverte, 2008

will require Egyptian garments manufacturers to establish innovative models and reorganize their supply chains¹⁴⁷.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.2

The market is of low-income and price-sensitive, with consumers adjusting to higher prices in local currency as the currency floats.¹⁴⁸

2. Criterion 2: Gender and social dimension: Weight of the criterion in the total 40%

a) Prospects for the integration of women

i) *Do women have a (possible) function in the VC? If yes, specify the groups and functions / roles. Weight of the guided question in Criterion 2 is 30%*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.24

Surveys show that agriculture in Egypt accounts for about 14.5% of GDP. Statistics often do not reflect the true contribution of women to agriculture because their agricultural work is considered as an extension of their reproductive role from one part and they exclude women's subsistence production and domestic work, from the other part even if women make up most of the workforce in this sector. Between 2011 and 2014, 43% of women were employed in agriculture versus only 24% of men. These are generally women from rural areas. Indeed, majority of them participate in agricultural activities, particularly those related to food security and animal production. More than 50% of rural women are actively involved in tasks such as fertilization, weeding, harvesting, sacking, marketing and storage. Some also undertake ploughing and irrigation. About 70% of their working time in agriculture is devoted to animal husbandry.¹⁴⁹ They are often involved in several activities and different contractual arrangements simultaneously. These women often work long hours and in labour-intensive sectors including harvesting and fertilizing land.¹⁵⁰

A survey of Upper and Lower Egypt¹⁵¹ shows that women's participation in harvesting was 67% in Lower-Egypt and 94.3% in Upper-Egypt. Despite women's contribution to the economy through agriculture, they are frequently overlooked in both data and investment. They may need to change jobs, depending on the season, or may remain unemployed or underemployed for periods of time.¹⁵²

The Principal Bank of Development and Agriculture, a major financial institution responsible for providing agricultural credit in Egypt, neglects to grant many long-term loans to women. Only one in twenty-six long-term borrowers and one-third of short-term borrowers are women. Furthermore, women make up only 5% of agricultural landowners.¹⁵³

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.48

Yes, the majority of workers in the TC sector in Egypt are women. Indeed, as of the late 1990s, the TC sector has increasingly attracted female workers. As of the late 1990s, the TC sector has increasingly attracted female workers. In fact, the entire increase in private sector employment

¹⁴⁷ International Trade Centre, Impact of Covid 19 on the global market and local industry of textile and clothing. December 2020. P.47. https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Redesign/Projects/GTEX/ImpactofCovidonTCindustry_Egypt_eng.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Egypt Information Technology Report Includes 5-year forecasts to 2022

¹⁴⁹ FAO, Role of women in agriculture, <http://www.fao.org/3/v9104e/v9104e01.htm>

¹⁵⁰ World Bank data quoted in <https://borgenproject.org/womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-in-egypt/>

¹⁵¹ Korang Ismail Abdel-Gawad quoted in <https://borgenproject.org/womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-in-egypt/>

¹⁵² FAO, 2010

¹⁵³ <https://borgenproject.org/womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-in-egypt/>

between 1998 and 2006 was on account of the feminization of these two sectors.¹⁵⁴ Compared to the national average, it should be noted that in 2007, women represent a little more or less than 20% of the workforce in the private sector (overall), whereas in the textile and clothing sector (TC), this share doubles to about 40%.¹⁵⁵ Labour-intensive industries, especially those producing for the export market, have often been criticised for providing only low-wage jobs, especially for women. This is also the case for TCs in Egypt which cannot be expected to generate a living wage, especially for women who are in lower paid jobs or who suffer from wage discrimination. Indeed, with men receiving 29% more per hour than women, the analysis of the available data shows¹⁵⁶ also that the gender pay gap in the TC sector is caused by lower staffing levels, the relegation of women to the wage gap is partly explained by the fact that women are concentrated in the lowest paid firms and occupations, and differences in performance within the same firm and occupation.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.48

In the ICT sector, women are generally young and skilled. Yet, their presence and role remain relative when compared to their capacity and high level of education as 92% of them have a university degree. The percentage of private sector employees who uses computers routinely increased among females from 22% in 2012/2013 to 30% in 2015/2016. These percentages reached among males 22% to 26%% respectively which indicates that the increase among females was higher than the increase among males.¹⁵⁷ These figures do not indicate however that, women are at more privileged positions since these data are only related to utilisation of computers (assistant/secretary positions). Moreover, the CEO's of three main governmental organisations namely Information Technology Industry development/ITIDA, Information Technology Institute/ITI and National Telecommunication Institute/NTI are women. Indeed, despite the efforts that Egypt is doing to improve the presence of women in the ICT sector, their percentage among professionals and administrators working in this sector decreased from 28% in 2011/2012 to half this percentage in 2018/2019 reflecting that more efforts are needed to create more jobs for women in the ICT sector.¹⁵⁸

ii) Is the number of women active / employed in the VC relatively high? What groups are they from? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 2 is 20%

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.08

In 2009, the share of the female agricultural labour force was 10% of the total labour force at the time, the non-agricultural women in the labour force represent 15%. Although the share of the female labour force grew slowly with a positive annual rate of 0.6%, the female non-agricultural labour force grew rapidly at an annual rate of 6%.¹⁵⁹

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 3; Weighted Score = 0.24

¹⁵⁴ Assaad and El-Hamidi 2009 quoted in Population Council, Gender and work in the MENA Region: Poverty, Job Quality and Labour Market Dynamics. Working paper series, No 13, 13 June 2011

¹⁵⁵ Population Council, Gender and work in the MENA Region: Poverty, Job Quality and Labour Market Dynamics. Working paper series, No 13, 13 June 2011

¹⁵⁶ Idem

¹⁵⁷ Dr. Magued Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019 <https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Dr Magued Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019 <https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ A review of the national and international agro-food Policies and institutions in Egypt, 2011

According to a study targeting Egyptian women, the share of women in the TC sector closely follows that of the industry at the national level, i.e. out of the 38% of the respondents, a higher number of women is recorded in the clothing sector (78%) compared to the textile sector (22%). These data are consistent with the reality on the ground, which highlights the recruitment of a relatively higher number of women than men in garment companies, particularly those whose core activity is sewing or exporting companies (29%) compared to non-exporting companies (28%). This is partly due to the fact that among those that are relatively more specialised in clothing, 63% are exporting companies and are in the clothing business compared to 58% that target the domestic market.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.32

As already highlighted, it is worth recalling that in Egypt, the number/percentage of women among graduates of computer science and information faculties ranged between 40% and 51% during the period 2006-2016 with the highest figure in 2007. The percentage decreased to 41% in 2016. Female graduates from communication sections in engineering faculties accounted for 52% in 2014 compared to 45% in 2012.¹⁶⁰ Yet, despite their access to ICT specialisation, women remain a minority, accounting for only 27% of employees in ICT companies. It is relevant to note, however, that this rate is higher than the average participation rate of Egyptian women in the workforce, which is 22%.¹⁶¹

iii) Do women exercise control over equipment, goods and sales revenue? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 2 is 20%

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.08

As is the case within the family, in terms of gender distribution of roles, unbalanced relationships and distribution of power, Egyptian women do not participate or very little in economic and political activities despite the observed positive change and the progress made the last few years. Because of their limited access to and control over resources including decision-making, women have virtually no control over the sector. Available data from a 1993 sample survey suggest that rural women are not empowered to make decisions at the household level in irrigated areas.¹⁶²

Men have almost exclusive authority on matters related to seeds, buying and selling of livestock and land, use of herbicides and agricultural machinery, what to grow and where to sell produce. Women make decisions on poultry and contribute to decisions on agriculture projects and the vaccination of livestock. While rural women spend the majority of their working time in agriculture on animal husbandry and can legally own livestock, most decisions are made by men. Women owners or farmers are an almost an invisible minority. In 2005, only 13% of business owners were women. The majority of women in agriculture, 85%, constitute the main unpaid labour force in family farming enterprises, compared to only 10% of men.¹⁶³

(2) For **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.08

160 Dr Magued Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019 <https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

161 Women and Work in Egypt

162 FAO, Role of women in agriculture, <http://www.fao.org/3/V9104e/v9104e01.htm>

163 FAO, 2010

As is the case in other sectors (health, education, agriculture), where they can represent a significant proportion of the workforce, if not a majority, in the TC sector too, women do not have much power, they are also a silent majority with no access and no control.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.32

Compared to other sectors and sub-sectors, both men and women are more likely to equally work as professionals (70% and 88% respectively). This is due to the fact that the sector is characteristic requires high-level skills knowing that young women make up the majority of ICT graduates. However, they are still far from being in control. Indeed, the way ICT is applied today has largely been an extension of the gender socialisation. Indeed, in Egypt, as is the tradition in Arab countries and in other sectors, woman has a subordinate position to man. She can contribute materially and financially to the household, but she is not considered as the head of the family and/or a breadwinner by law or in practice, including if her husband has no job or no income. It is he who decides how the income is spent if he "allows" her to work, even if she is legally entitled to do so. Even the society does not consider her a productive member of society. Furthermore, most governing bodies are dominated by men; legislative and judicial decisions often lack a gender perspective and do not represent women's interests.

The role of ICT especially the ownership of ICT equipment and more broadly the access to and control over the new technology remains in Egypt a goal to be achieved in the policy -maker's agenda as presented in "PC for every home" and other initiatives launched by the Egyptian government. At the macro-level, supposedly gender-neutral ICT policies regarding education, training and price structure may have an unintended negative impact based on gender roles and access to ICT resources. In urban areas, there is a high percentage of ICT infrastructure ownership like computers and mobile phones for females. However, female usage of computers is still less than men and mobile ownership is also less (25% to female whereas 75% to male). As to visiting ICT clubs and using these facilities, indicators reveal that in urban areas 55.48% of internet cafes users are male while 44.52% are female. There are, nevertheless, attempts to benefit from ICT and use it as a mean to empower women in Egypt. In rural areas in Egypt, where female specifically face the major obstacles to education and usage of ICT, there are new ways that NGOs, under the umbrella of the Egyptian government, are targeting the problem of digital divide and using ICT to empower women in these areas.¹⁶⁴ In the ICT professional sector, women are mostly found in production services (64%), followed by administrative support (13%) and sales and marketing (11%). The distribution of men between the departments is slightly less concentrated. The distribution of men between the departments is slightly less concentrated.¹⁶⁵

iv) What are the obstacles preventing women from accessing productive resources and economic activities? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 2 is 20%

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.08

The main obstacles are related to the patriarchal system and related gender construction and discrimination against women that characterize the MENA region including in Egypt. This impacts access to and control over resources to only quote some examples. In 1989, men represented about

¹⁶⁴ Is ICT empowering Women in Egypt? An empirical study By Mona F. Badran1 Lecturer at Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University <https://www.mak.ac.eg/documents/IFIP/EMPOWERINGWOMENINEGYPT.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ Women and Work in Egypt

76% of landowners, while only 24% were women. According to the available data on land and agricultural ownership by men and women,¹⁶⁶ in 1999,¹⁶⁷ women own only 5.2 % (i.e. 236,632) of the total agricultural land (4,537,319).

The size of land ownership is generally larger for men than for women. Although the land reclamation programme in Egypt stipulates equal access to land for men and women, far fewer women than men applied for land, due to the difficult living and working conditions on the newly reclaimed land, and as a result they represent only 7.4% of the purchasers of newly reclaimed land.¹⁶⁸

In 1993, although the size of loans for men and women was about the same, the Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit (PBDAC), allowed 88% of short-term production loans and 84% of investment loans to men for only 12% and 16%, respectively. In addition, the difficult employment situation of women and the violation of their most basic rights in the private sector due to illegal practices should be highlighted: more than a third of female agricultural workers do not have a contract and 22% are under the age of 18. Due to their limited means, such as low loans, and the many other economic obstacles they face, rural women are often trapped in low value-added activities. Their income is very low because even if the basic salary is the same for men and women, discrimination occurs in the variable part, which is increasingly important and on which the bosses can play.¹⁶⁹ It is worth to also note that the precarious situation of women, especially in the field of agriculture has been aggravated by the conservative not to say extremist trends and practices observed at least since the two last decades in the region and in Egypt.

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.08

Past occupational segregation and discrimination determine the current gender composition of the sector. There is also strong evidence of value discrimination, although women are favoured in the performance of exporting companies and in most occupational categories except engineers. Women must fight to change the law, ensure its enforcement and change the rigid preconceptions and deeply ingrained cultural and social forces that continue to encumber women and reinforce discrimination.¹⁷⁰

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.32

As regard to the public access to ICT resources, computer use by women is still lower than that of men and cell phone ownership is also lower (25% for women versus 75% for men). As for the attendance of ICT clubs and the use of these facilities, indicators show that in urban areas, 55.48% of cybercafé users are men while 44.52% are women.¹⁷¹

b) Potential for social innovation

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/data-map/statistics/en/>

¹⁶⁷ World Programme for the Census of Agriculture

¹⁶⁸ FAO, Role of women in agriculture, <http://www.fao.org/3/v9104e/v9104e01.htm>

¹⁶⁹ Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia: the place of women at work, 2012

¹⁷⁰ (Female Wages in the Egyptian Textiles and Clothing Industry: Low Pay and Discrimination, 2016). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310812678_Female_Wages_in_the_Egyptian_Textiles_and_Clothing_Industry_Low_Pay_and_Discrimination

¹⁷¹ Is ICT empowering Women in Egypt? An empirical study By Mona F. Badran1 Lecturer at Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University <https://www.mak.ac.ug/documents/IFIP/EMPOWERINGWOMENINEGYPT.pdf>

- i) *Is VC characterized by the presence of shared roles and integration between chain actors, consistent with a social innovation approach? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 2 is 10%*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.04

There is no social innovation approach and more than any other field, the vision and practices in the agriculture field remain modelled on the gender construction of the society, the traditional distribution of gender roles and the limited access of women to and control over resources.

The roles are not shared and gender-based discrimination is mainstreamed at all levels of the VC. As regard to Gender Division of Labour in Egypt as in many traditional societies, while the division of labour between men and women varies by crop, overall men carry out most of the land preparation, planting, weeding, irrigation and pest control. Women contribute moderately to seed preparation, fertilization and harvesting, and significantly to storage and marketing. Food processing is the primary responsibility of women. In animal husbandry, men are primarily responsible for the care of water buffalo, donkeys, cows and sheep, while women carry out most of the milking, processing and marketing of milk and animal products. In fisheries, fish catching, feeding and marketing are primarily men's tasks, while women contribute about 52% of the labour in fish processing and net-making, and carry out 42% of net maintenance and repair. Women also carry out virtually all domestic tasks, including water and fuel collection, and food processing and preparation.¹⁷²

The existence of the notion of the "glass ceiling" or the obstacle to the promotion of women in hierarchical structures prevents women from accessing more important roles in the VC. According to the NWF, only 10% of executives and managers are women in the private sector.¹⁷³

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.04

Women receive only 72% of men's wages. This pay gap stems in part from the fact that women join the industry at a young age (which accounts for 40% of the pay gap), are concentrated in the lowest paid occupations (14% of the gap) and in small businesses (6%).¹⁷⁴

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 3; Weighted Score = 0.12

The literature on the participation of women in the labour force indicates the gap between men and women in general, and in professional status, salary, distribution of occupations and career choice in particular. Although this trend has changed in recent years and more and more women are joining the workforce, there is still a significant gender gap that could lead to different attitudes and behaviours in everyday life, including the adoption and use of new information and communication technologies.¹⁷⁵

3. Criterion 3: Institutional dimension

a) Promotion policies and regulation of the sector exist and are in force

¹⁷² FAO, Role of women in agriculture, <http://www.fao.org/3/v9104e/v9104e01.htm>

¹⁷³ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/women-and-work-access-limitations-and-potential-tourism-and>

¹⁷⁴ Female Wages in the Egyptian Textiles and Clothing Industry: Low Pay and Discrimination, 2016 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310812678_Female_Wages_in_the_Egyptian_Textiles_and_Clothing_Industry_Low_Pay_and_Discrimination

¹⁷⁵ Is ICT empowering Women in Egypt? An empirical study By Mona F. Badran1 Lecturer at Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University <https://www.mak.ac.ug/documents/IFIP/EMPOWERINGWOMENINEGYPT.pdf>

- i) *Are (promotional) policies and regulations for the sector in place and are they implemented / enforced? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 3 is 30%*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.06

The State exercises strong and direct control over several agri-food chains, which hinders the efficient functioning of the market. The important role of the state in the agri-food sector limits the place to participation in the private sector in the agri-food sector. Private sector entities operating in these sub-sectors typically work either in collaboration with the public sector (e.g., wheat milling for the government) or in a segment of the market where the state specifically allows private participation through licenses or allocations (e.g. sugar beets rather than sugar cane). Public sector policies and actions have also contributed to market concentration in markets open to the private sector.¹⁷⁶

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.12

Government policies towards the textile industry have had a major impact on the structure and competitiveness of this industry. Trade and import policies are formulated to protect this industry due to its significant impact on the national economy and its important role in solving the unemployment problem in Egypt.¹⁷⁷

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.24

Many initiatives are taken in Egypt to promote women presence in the ICT sector to only quote some examples:

- The IFAD-ILO Taqeeem initiative-Egypt launched in 2018 a nation-wide reality TV competition targeting both male and female entrepreneurs as competitors.¹⁷⁸ Preliminary results made obvious the possibility to shift public perception on the ability of young women to launch and run their own business;
- the first portal in Egypt to address “ICT for women” with the objective to “support females and empower them to use ICT in all aspects of life benefiting from their abilities or to join the field of ICT and help them to overcome the challenges they are facing”. It provides information for women and girls who are interested in the field and seek to learn or to join a career opportunity;¹⁷⁹
- the contest for women innovation in ICT announced by the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology/MCIT to encourage the Egyptian women to enter the ICT economic sector and empowering them via ICT and use of ICT tools through a series of activities in line with SDG 5 such as the Women ICT excellence Award which included both individual and MSMEs categories and;¹⁸⁰
- as part of its ICT 2030 strategy, the Egyptian government is undertaking a series of investments, capacity building and training programs, digital government service reforms and infrastructure upgrades.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ World Bank Group, 2020

¹⁷⁷ Textile industry in Egypt, University of Bradford

¹⁷⁸ World Bank 2018b

¹⁷⁹ http://www.ictforwoman.gov.eg/overview_obj.aspx

¹⁸⁰ Dr Magued Osman: Women in ICT sector, Women National Council, World bank and Baseera, May 2019

<https://en.enow.gov.eg/Report/12.pdf>

¹⁸¹ International Trade Administration

Parallel to these efforts academic public and private institutions succeeded in building human capital. Compared to other sectors, ICT was ahead of the curve in adopting inclusion policies that are gender sensitive. However, in either study or work fields, the numbers reflect that more opportunities and incentives should be given to women presence and participation which witness fluctuations in the ICT sector.

- ii) *Are the public authorities providing tangible support or can we hope for such support? If so, describe and provide evidence of this support. Weight of the guided question in Criterion 3 is 30%*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.24

The 2030 strategy, which is a review of the 2017 strategy, was confirmed at the Sharm al Sheikh economic conference in March 2015, and huge investments were announced in the agricultural sector. On the one hand, seven sites have been identified in the Western Desert, representing a total of 400,000 ha of new land (i.e. 10% of the current Useful Agricultural Area), for agricultural development, with groundwater as a source of water supply. On the other hand, investments are planned for the modernization of irrigation in the “old” lands, access to the market for the production of fruits and vegetables, processing (fruits and vegetables, beet sugar, medicinal and aromatic plants, dairy products, fish). At last, the creation of a legislative environment more conducive to investment in agriculture was announced: a new law on agricultural cooperatives adopted in December 2014 allows them to become real economic operators; reforms are planned concerning contractualisation for the sale of agricultural products, social security and farmers' pensions, as well as intellectual property for the seeds sector¹⁸².

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 2; Weighted Score = 0.12

Fears of a crisis in the textile sector following the end of the quota regime in January 2005 prompted the authorities to enter into agreements, notably through the establishment of Qualified Industrial Zones/QIZs. Under the December 2004 agreement between Egypt and Israel, products produced in QIZs can enter the US market without quotas or tariffs. By the end of 2005, nearly 400 companies had obtained authorization to operate in QIZs, and 250 were operational, particularly in the textile sector¹⁸³.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 3; Weighted Score = 0.18

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT) has launched an initiative called “Our Future is Digital” and aims to train 100,000 young Egyptians and develop their ICT skills in areas with high market demand, including website design, data analytics and digital marketing.¹⁸⁴

b) Willingness of chain actors, public authorities, donors and organizations to evolve, collaborate and harmonize interventions

- i) *Which donors / aid organizations are ready to collaborate? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 3 is 10%*

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.24

¹⁸² (French Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-food and Forestry, 2015)

¹⁸³ (Economic Outlook in Africa, AfDB / OECD 2006)

¹⁸⁴ International Trade Administration

In order to promote the employment strategy and gender equity in rural areas, FAO, IFAD and ILO have joined forces to carry out an assessment of the latest thinking on the gender dimension of agricultural employment. The three organizations are committed to improving gender equality and the empowerment of women in agriculture and rural areas, and to strengthening women's leadership and participation in decision-making.¹⁸⁵

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.06

These include the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality Control (EOSQC) and the General Organization for Export and Import Control (GOEIC).

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.24

There are several organizations supporting the sub-sector in Egypt through training programs, scholarships, etc., such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, The Youth Activist - Youth Allies (YA-YA) Network, The Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF), Grant for the Web., ILO, GIZ, UNDP and more.

ii) How present and usable is the non-profit sector in VC. Weight of the guided question in Criterion 3 is 10%

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.08

Organizations in the non-profit sector are quite present, for example, technology centres, including for micro and small enterprises managed by the Social Development Fund (SDF). Among these is the Egyptian Traceability Centre for Agri-industrial Exports (e-Trace), created by UNIDO to promote new technologies in Egyptian agriculture and agri-industries.¹⁸⁶ (STED, 2015).

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.08

The non-profit sector is represented by several associations such as the ETDA Egyptian Textile Development Association, the Textile Consolidation Fund, founded in 1953, is a non-profit collaborative institute funded by textile producers and the Egyptian Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Alexandria Cotton Exporters Association (ALCOTEXA).

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.08

The non-profit sector is present in Egypt in the ICT sub-sector, for example, Techsoup Global which is a non-profit organization aiming to provide NGOs with the technological resources and the knowledge they need to operate in their own right. full potential.

iii) Are chain actors open to discussion and cooperation? Why? Weight of the guided question in Criterion 3 is 20%

(1) For the **Agri-food Sub-sector**: Score= 4; Weighted Score = 0.16

Yes, In Egypt, there is the system of agri-food cooperatives which are quite well organized and which are open to cooperation. The total number of local cooperatives amounts to 6 412 cooperatives.¹⁸⁷

(2) For the **Textiles and clothing subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.04

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/i1638e/i1638e.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_550990.pdf

¹⁸⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/i1638e/i1638e.pdf>

Cooperation exists at an international level but the documents and reports concerning the sector do not show real cooperation between the actors in the chain.

(3) For the **ICT subsector**: Score= 1; Weighted Score = 0.04

The Egyptian ICT value chain is made up of different types of actors, influencers and supporters, however, the literature does not mention a field of cooperation or communication between these different actors.

Section II - Analysis of main findings in the matrix

The analysis is based on the review of the data collected and organised in the selection matrix. They were evaluated and scored on a scale of 1 to 4 according to the degree of response provided by the information collected in the documentation. Thus, the scores obtained for each criterion of each dimension are summarised below according to the methodology adopted for the comparison of the three sub-sectors.

Table 21 - Results of the scores by criteria of comparison of the sub-sectors in Egypt

Criteria and scoring rate	Maximum Score	Sub-sector 1: Agri-food	Sub-sector 2: Textiles	Sub-sector 3: ICT
Economic dimension (40%)	1,6	1	0,7	1
Gender and Social dimension (40%)	1,6	0,52	0,92	1,56
Institutional dimension (20%)	0,8	0,62	0,38	0,62
TOTAL (100%)	4	2,14	2	3,18

1. In terms of economic dimension

The Egyptian agri-food system, which combines both agriculture and food processing as well as the related input and trade systems, contributes to 24.5% of the country's GDP and 23.2% to the value added of the Egyptian labour force. The vast majority of agribusiness activity is located in Lower Egypt (78.3% of gross agribusiness production); while Upper Egypt plays an important role in primary agriculture, contributing to 30.2% of gross agricultural production. Although Egypt is one of the world's leading producers of fruits and vegetables and the world's largest exporter of fresh citrus fruits, Egypt does not appear on the list of top food processors for any of them. Egypt processes less than 10% and in some cases less than 5% of its fresh crop, well below the world average of 25-35%. For example, while Egypt is the 5th largest producer of tomatoes in the world, only 3% are used in the Egyptian processing industry. Moreover, less than 1% is exported and losses during the production and logistics phases reach 25-35%. This shows that there are huge opportunities to improve the growth and added value of the sector, provided that dedicated accompanying measures are taken.¹⁸⁸

Regarding **the textile subsector**, the Egyptian textile industry has been in decline for the past 30 years, with many enterprises, especially those owned by the state, using obsolete equipment.

¹⁸⁸ World bank, creating markets in Egypt, realizing the full potential of a productive private sector, December 2020. P144. <https://www.ifc.org/>

Investment in spinning, weaving, knitting, and dyeing has been very limited, so the subsector is characterized by various bottlenecks and a lack of vertical integration.¹⁸⁹

Finally, the **Information and Communication Technology / ICT sector in Egypt** is very robust, with a growth rate higher than Egypt's GDP growth level. Its contribution to GDP increased to 4% in 2019 from 3.5% in 2018. Total investments in the sector increased by 24.3% in 2019 and reached \$107 million in the first quarter of 2020 (142 investment deals compared to 113 in 2018, and 40 in the first quarter of 2020). As part of its ICT 2030 strategy, the Egyptian government is undertaking a series of investments, capacity-building and training programs, digital government service reforms, and infrastructure upgrades. The strategy calls for the launch of new initiatives to maximize the ICT sector's contribution to Egypt's economic growth by focusing on capacity building, electronic component design and manufacturing, and technology parks. The strategy also includes a plan for the digital transformation of key government services in the areas of education, healthcare, and government services.¹⁹⁰

The performances by sub-sector in the Economic Dimension are as follows:

Criteria and scoring rate	Maximum Score	Sub-sector 1: Agri-food	Sub-sector 2: Textiles	Sub-sector 3: ICT
Economic dimension (40%)	1,6	1	0,7	1

As regards the economic dimension, the selection matrix score applied to the three sub-sectors showed a better score for the information and communication technologies sub-sector and the agri-food sub-sector with a score of 1, highlighting a significant economic contribution of 24.5% to GDP for the agri-food and ICT sub-sector. The ICT sub-sector is characterised by strong investment growth with an increase of 24.3% in 2019 compared to 2018. Finally, the textiles sub-sector was given a score of 0.7 due to the lack of private investment in this area which has been in decline for the past thirty years.

2. In terms of gender and social inclusion

In 2015, 42.5 percent of women were employed in **agriculture** versus only 23.8 percent of men. These are generally women from rural areas. Indeed, majority of them participate in agricultural activities, particularly those related to food security and animal production.¹⁹¹ However as regards to gender distribution of roles, unbalanced relationships and distribution of power, it is important to highlight Egyptian women do not participate or very little in economic and political activities despite the observed positive change and the progress made the last few years. Because of their limited access to and control over resources including decision-making, women have virtually no control over the sector

The situation of women in the **textile and garment sub-sector** is no different than in the agricultural sector where the vast majority of workers are women. Gender-based discrimination and violence are still prevalent. As is the case in many textile and apparel producing countries, a gender gap exists

¹⁸⁹ Grumiller et al, Strategies for sustainable upgrading in global value chains: The Egyptian textile and apparel sector, ÖFSE Policy Note, No. 33/2020, 2020, P6. Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE), Vienna

¹⁹⁰ Fitch solution, Egypt information technology report includes 5-years forecast to 2022. 2018, P44. <https://nations-emergentes.org/>

¹⁹¹ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/egypt_labour_market_report.pdf

in the Egyptian textile industry, with highly skilled managerial and professional positions generally held by men, while women are assigned to low-skilled jobs. A general explanation provided for this bias is by referring to cultural factors, which contribute to women leaving work after marriage or high rates of absenteeism given family obligations that women need to tend to. All these factors allegedly discourage companies from promoting women.

Finally, compared to the other subsectors, the **IT subsector** is characterized by less gender inequality, as both men and women are more likely to work as professionals (70% and 88% respectively). This is due to the fact that the sector requires high-level skills. Women are mostly found in production departments (64%), followed by administrative support (13%) and sales and marketing (11%). The distribution of men across departments is slightly less concentrated.¹⁹² However, in general women's use of computers is still lower than men's, and cell phone ownership is also lower (25% for women versus 75% for men). As for attendance at ICT clubs and use of these facilities, the indicators show that in urban areas, 55.48% of cybercafé users are men, while 44.52% are women.¹⁹³

The performances by sub-sectors in the Gender and Social Dimension are as follows:

Criteria and scoring rate	Maximum Score	Sub-sector 1: Agri-food	Sub-sector 2: Textiles	Sub-sector 3: ICT
Gender & Social inclusion Dimension (40%)	1,6	0,52	0,92	1,56

The ICT sub-sector stood out strongly in terms of gender and social inclusion, with a score of 1.56 compared to the other sub-sectors. Indeed, the ICT is characterised by highly qualified employees and by the presence of women, particularly in the production sector, where 64% of all women are employed. In second place is found the textiles sub-sector with a score of 0.92, mainly because of the lower wages for women. Finally, the agri-food sub-sector had the lowest score of 0.52 due to women's limited access to and control over resources, including decision-making, as women have virtually no control over this sub-sector.

3. At the level of the institutional dimension

According to the World Bank,¹⁹⁴ the state exercises in the **agri-food sub-sector**, strong and direct control over several agri-food chains, which hinders the efficient functioning of the market. The important role of the state in the agri-food sector limits the space for private sector participation in this sub-sector. Indeed, private sector entities operating in this sub-sector typically work either in collaboration with the public sector (e.g., wheat milling for the government) or in a market segment where the state specifically allows private participation through licenses or allocations (e.g. sugar beets processors rather than sugarcane processors). Public sector policies and actions have also contributed to market concentration in markets open to the private sector. However, the sub-sector is supported by a 2030 strategy and numerous development project initiatives.

¹⁹² ETF, Women and work in Egypt, Tourism and ICT sectors a case study. 2010. P60.

¹⁹³ Badran, Mona is ICT empowering women in egypt? An empirical study. P34.

<https://www.mak.ac.ug/documents/IFIP/EMPOWERINGWOMENINEGYPT.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ World bank, creating markets in Egypt , realizing the full potential of a productive private sector, December 2020. P144. <https://www.ifc.org/>

The country continues its support to the agri-food sub-sector by engaging in the promotion of local products through the organization of its first local products competition to be held in 2022.¹⁹⁵ In addition, the FAO, IFAD and ILO have partnered to conduct an assessment of the latest developments on the gender dimension of agricultural employment. The three organizations are committed to improving gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture and rural areas, and to strengthening women's leadership and participation in decision making.

The textile sub-sector has benefited from QIZs (Qualified Industrial Zones) under the December 2004 agreement between Egypt and Israel, and products manufactured in QIZs can enter the U.S. market without quotas or tariffs. Nearly 400 companies had been approved to operate in QIZs, and 250 were operational, including in the textile sector. Trade and import policies are formulated to protect this industry because of its significant impact on the national economy and its important role in solving the unemployment problem in Egypt. Thus, government policies toward the textile industry have had a major impact on the structure and competitiveness of this industry. While international cooperation does exist at the international level, documents and reports regarding the sector do not show actual real cooperation within the actors in the chain.

Finally, **the ICT sub-sector** is supported by the Egyptian ICT 2030 strategy, under which the government is undertaking a series of investments, capacity building and training programs, digital government services reforms and infrastructure upgrades. The country has also benefited from development partners support, grants, training programs, scholarships, etc. to increase knowledge and capacity in the sector, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Youth Activist - Youth Allies (YA-YA) Network, the Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF), Grant for the Web, ILO, GIZ, UNDP and much more.

The performances by sub-sector in the Institutional Dimension are as follows:

Criteria and scoring rate	Maximum Score	Sub-sector 1: Agri-food	Sub-sector 2: Textiles	Sub-sector 3: ICT
Institutional dimension (20%)	0.8	0.62	0.38	0.62

The same score of 0.62 was given to both ICT and agri-food sub-sector. The latter is strategic. It is mostly controlled by state enterprises in order to ensure food security. It is supported by the 2030 strategy and numerous development projects. This is also the case for the ICT sub-sector. Finally, the textile sub-sector only scored 0.38 due to the lack of data on real cooperation among the actors of the chain.

4. Stakeholders consultation and analysis

It is worth to highlight at this stage, the difficulties specific to the data collection phase were encountered in terms of (non) availability and consistency. Availability of data on the topic at hand in the various countries is extremely limited, not to say scarce. An added layer of complication was due the fact that when available and depending on the sources consulted, data were not always updated and/or not always harmonized in terms of nature of information or dates of survey/or

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4BLnKW0s>

publication, the data found was often contradictory, further impeding the process. It was still possible to go all the way as illustrated in the results herewith wrapped up findings:

Table 22 - GSVCA scores for Egypt

Criteria and scoring rate	Maximum Score	Sub-sector 1: Agri-food	Sub-sector 2: Textiles	Sub-sector 3: ICT
Economic dimension (40%)	1,6	1	0,7	1
Gender and Social dimension (40%)	1,6	0,52	0,92	1,56
Institutional dimension (20%)	0,8	0,62	0,38	0,62
TOTAL (100%)	4	2,14	2	3,18

Taking into account the literature and available data review, and following the comparison of the 3 sub-sectors using the methodology articulated around the three dimensions (economic, gender and social and institutional innovation), the Information and Communication Technology/ICT subsector stood out as opposed to the other sub-sectors at hand, demonstrating a better dynamic and perspectives, as the one with the highest potential in terms of:

- Economic potential and expansion, market estimated to reach \$5 billion in 2022,
- Growth is supported by the government's 2030 strategy together with the support of international organizations,
- The progress obvious in the positioning of women as highly qualified employees.

Indeed, this is a sub-sector where gender inequalities are less prominent than in other sub-sectors considering that this sub-sector hires women, generally young women with a high level of education (92% have university degrees). However, while less affected by gender inequalities, the female workforce in this sub-sector is still a minority, with women accounting for about one third of employees (27%) in the companies as surveyed by the European Training Foundation (ETF). Although uneven, this rate is higher than the average participation rate of Egyptian women in the labour force, which is currently 22%. At the institutional level, the government has put in place strategies and development projects and programmes for ICT development in Egypt.

Thus, in order to deepen the analysis of the ICT sub-sector context, a consultation with relevant stakeholders was planned and consisted of interviews of ten (10) entrepreneurs, five (5) women and four (5) men, operating in the ICT sub-sector. It is worth to precise that due to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions and prevention measures, it has not been possible to organise a focus group to consolidate the findings of the interviews

The analysis of the responses is organised in four categories i.e. access to resources, effect of competition, access to markets, and regulation and governance of the sub-sector, leading to the development of a SWOT table that will enable the proposal of measures to improve the positioning of women entrepreneurs.

→ Access to resources

At the primary production level (human resources and suppliers), the current situation of human resources, men and women, is determined by the delegation of technical tasks and the division of labour, the hierarchical organisation of which is characterised in an IT company by cooperation between individuals with different tasks and partially divergent interests. Indeed, based on the respondents' statements, many male and female entrepreneurs emphasised a certain distribution of tasks and gendered specialisation. Indeed, some ICT activities are more marked by the presence of men, such as software development and programming, while other activities such as graphic design or social network management are more the domain of women.

In terms of access to resources, notably primary solution providers and especially innovative solutions to improve work. This requires a certain availability in terms of presence at conferences and seminars. It is on this element that some business leaders emphasised the difference between men who enjoy greater availability and responsiveness than women, especially those who are married or who are burdened by family responsibilities that reduce their ability to seek new solutions for the business through participation in this type of event. Thus, the majority of interviewees agree that men are better informed about the evolution of the sub-sector from a technical point of view and have better access to resources than women.

At the level of business management and more specifically the relationship with employees and customers, it is important to equip women with strong human resource management skills given the resistance that some have experienced from their staff but also from customers as illustrated in the market access paragraph. On the same note, it is important to mention that university students are not prepared for entrepreneurship yet some development projects does exist to support women's entrepreneurial initiatives in the ICT sector, such as the Microsoft project.

→ *Effects of competition*

The ICT sub-sector is undergoing rapid change, which requires close monitoring of technological innovations and developments. According to the women entrepreneurs interviewed, this requires more efforts from them and other women, who are usually overwhelmed by family responsibilities. In fact, according to some male entrepreneurs, men are more active than women in the service sector in general. At the marketing level, men are more efficient as they have time for meetings or business dinners. However, some of them did not mention possible differences between women and men, as for them some work is done through tenders, especially with multinationals, where the relationship is not direct but through a digital system that allows the submission of tenders and their objective processing.

→ *Access to Markets*

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a positive impact on the ICT sub-sector in Egypt as elsewhere in the world. Indeed, the use of information technologies has multiplied, especially for teleworking, the digitalisation of services and many other activities with a growing demand. However, the access to this market is conditioned by an active search for information and as a result, according to many respondents, men are more efficient in for such research, while women generally have less time for customer research due to their multiple roles.

In order to better differentiate between the negotiating power of women and men, one respondent stated that "*during business meetings, the customers themselves are more likely to address the male*

employees of the company even in the presence of their female boss, whether she is the head of the company or a manager, and even more so if the woman is presented as a partner or as a 'co-founder', male dominance takes over...".

→ Regulation and governance

Despite the improvement of the internet infrastructure in Egypt and the implementation of strategies and incentives by the government, some obstacles were pointed out by the interviewees, such as the tax rate and the taxes that change very frequently and vary from 30% to 54% according to some of them. In addition, the increase in value added tax (VAT) to 14% has had an effect on the prices of services.

For the respondents, this situation creates in some cases a misunderstanding not to say loss of trust among the client when assessing the price quotations for services (the most/less expensive). This requires more reliable access to regulatory information by the contractor. On another level, a debate is initiated on the taxation of freelancers working on social networks, such as influencers (YouTube and Instagram), which raises the question of the state's willingness to tax their income.

5. SWOT analysis of the ICT subsector

The SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) makes it possible to organise the information collected in the previous phase in order to have a more oriented reading of the support criteria necessary to strengthen a value chain. On the one hand, opportunities should be used or seized to reduce the weaknesses of a value chain; on the other hand, threats should be circumvented based on the strengths of a value chain. Below we present the SWOT analysis of the Information and Communication Technology sector.

Table 23- SWOT analysis of the ICT sub-sector

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Robust sector with rapid growth Investment of the Egyptian government in this sub-sector through initiatives to train youth and develop their ICT skills in areas of high market demand High quality fibre optic broadband connection is available in key locations such as Egyptian Techno parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of sufficient preparedness of Egyptian university graduates for entering the workforce and their lack of management skills in the private sector • The IT sector needs to widen its appeal to a more diverse pool of talent and thus include more women
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of mobile and Internet subscriptions is increasing • Egypt's potential to develop as a regional hub, being at the crossroads of several international fibre cables (SEA-ME-WE 3 and 4, and FLAG) linking Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia • High number of young people and skilled workforce • Strong regulatory framework and inflection point for electronic payments • High potential of Egypt's large consumer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited national branding: Egypt is not well known as an IT outsourcing destination • Existing links in the EU are not systematically used • Business support service providers: IT-specific export activities are limited

population, especially its large social media-savvy youth segment

- E-commerce opportunities allow many companies to expand their market reach and become competitive producers for the local market or as part of global supply chains

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusions

As shown previously, Egypt ranks low in gender equality compared to other countries worldwide. As per the Global Gender Gap report, Egypt progressed to the 129th position with noticeable improvements in providing equal educational opportunities for boys and girls. Its best score is in education attainment, thanks to which the country ranks first on enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Statistics show that gender gaps in school enrolment rates and educational attainment have been closed with pockets of illiteracy rates concentrated in rural areas and within a certain older age bracket. Literacy rates stand at 71.17% for males and 65.51% for females,¹⁹⁶ with illiteracy rates being significantly higher among rural women than among urban women.

In Egypt, women have significantly lower participation in the labor force than men (20% vs 75.2%) and the economic climate having been impacted by COVID-19 is unlikely to improve this rate. Large shares of women in MENA economies are employed in sectors that have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, such as manufacturing, tourism, and business travel services, and have subsequently lost their jobs. Most women are employed in micro and small enterprises, which are less resilient in times of crises and more likely to resort to temporary suspension or termination of contracts to face the economic downturn.¹⁹⁷ Especially, since the wider economic climate in the region – with high unemployment rates and a large and saturated public sector and a sluggish private sector – is contributing to the common belief that men's access to jobs should take priority over women's. According to a survey carried out by Promundo and UN Women, 98% of men and 88% of women in Egypt uphold the idea that men should have access to jobs before women when work opportunities are scarce, noting that geographical disparities further enhance the pockets of inequalities.

As an example, early marriages are much more common in rural than in urban areas (13% of rural women under 20 as compared to 7% of urban women). Rural women are more likely to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal jobs than men, who occupy more rewarding and higher skilled positions. Finally, the overwhelming majority of women working in the informal sector reside in rural areas (estimated by a UN Women study of 2018 at 94%).¹⁹⁸

The Egyptian constitution of 2014 has granted women equal rights to men in education, health and economic participation. Egypt is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the core ILO conventions that promote gender equality and non-discrimination between women and men, with reservations. The reservations on CEDAW are around Article 2 on policy measures and Article 16 regarding marriage and family life, and article 29. Egyptian legislation does not provide full equal rights to women on their personal status. Furthermore, as was evidenced, enforcement of legal provisions is uneven, when at all possible.

¹⁹⁶ <https://countrveconomy.com/demography/literacy-rate/egypt>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-crisis-response-in-mena-countries-4b366396/#endnotea0z72>

¹⁹⁸ <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20egypt/attachments/publications/2018/05/profile%20of%20rural%20women%20%20final%20version.pdf?la=en&vs=5320>

Women are often unaware of their rights and social norms combined with financial constraints discourage them from going to court.¹⁹⁹

Social norms in Egypt continue to be heavily influenced by a patriarchal system justified by religious beliefs and norms that reinforce gender stereotypes: men are expected to take on the role of provider and women, primary caregiver. In that context, strong social attitudes surrounding traditional gender roles act as obstacles for women's economic participation. Beliefs around women's and negative attitudes towards women who work deter married women to work and more so when they have children.

Further analysis of various studies and indexes highlighted the high gender-discrimination that women face in Egypt whether in legislation, practices, and attitudes that restrict women's rights and opportunities. As to the rates Violence Against Women that ranges from sexual harassment, Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence or Female Genital Mutilation, the numbers are staggering. Sexual Harassment despite an amendment to the Egypt Penal Code in 2014 criminalizing sexual harassment, women continue to suffer from varying levels of verbal and physical abuse and harassment, all of which limit their activity in the public sphere.

Despite lack of reliable data in Egypt, the latest rates of GBV are presumably in alignment with the surge of GBV observed globally during the past 18 months. Stay-at-home orders, severe economic distress and other issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic have meant girls and women have been essentially locked indoors with their tormentors – exposed to increased control, increased violence and fewer opportunities to seek help, if they dare to do so. Globally, UN Women estimates that over 60% of women who experience violence never report these crimes, or ask for protection and support, especially when the surroundings are very permissive.²⁰⁰ In Egypt, domestic violence against women is largely tolerated with a large acceptance for “the husband's right to discipline his wife” within the community regardless of gender.

Legislation on setting up and managing a business is gender neutral. Women can legally sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account in the same way as a man. However, in reality, there are significant financial and nonfinancial barriers which block women-owned SMEs' potential as economic drivers. The financial barriers that women-owned SMEs face such as unfavourable lending policies and lack of collateral, severely restrict their access to finance. As detailed discriminatory access to financing strongly obstructs entrepreneurial prospects for women and turning to angel investors is not an option as angel investors and seed investment organizations led by men tend to prefer to invest in men-led start-ups.²⁰¹ Additional challenges women entrepreneurs face are in terms of access to information, markets, networks. While these challenges are not specific to women entrepreneurs, preliminary data suggest that women entrepreneurs tend to experience greater vulnerability compared to their male counterparts.²⁰²

All of these attitudes, when taken together, can constitute an impediment to equal gender relations within the household, to women's ability to work and hence to their economic empowerment as

¹⁹⁹ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/women-s-economic-empowerment-in-selected-mena-countries_9789264279322-en#page23

²⁰⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27149&LangID=E#ftn2>

²⁰¹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/861491551113547855/pdf/134846-WP-PUBLIC-march-2-WB-Women-Study-EN.pdf>

²⁰² <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/44b004b2-ed46-48fc-8ade-aa0f485069a1/WomenOwnedSMes+Report-Final.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=kiiZZDZ>

well as more generally to women's voice and agency. These traditional patterns are usually set in childhood and perpetuated by women and men within their own families.²⁰³

From an entrepreneurship perspective, lower levels of education; lack of female role models in the business sector; fewer business-orientated networks in their communities; lack of capital and assets; lower status in society and a culturally-induced lack of assertiveness and confidence in their ability to succeed in business are all factors that prevent women from perceiving as well as acting on entrepreneurial opportunities.

As a resource-poor economy, Egypt holds more labour-intensive industries, which increases the need to capitalize on women's economic participation. Participating in economic activities allows women to make positive changes in their lives, with positive ripple effects for their families, communities and societies. Providing women with equal rights and opportunities in education and the workplace is not only an end in itself, but is also a precondition for tapping into their full potential, especially important for economies like Egypt. A violence-free working environment and safe public spaces can increase women's engagement in economic activities, and is a pre-requisite to improve women's economic opportunities.

Currently, despite the last few years' positive trends for women, GEM analysis shows that most new businesses are still more likely to be started by men rather than women.²⁰⁴ As repeatedly stated by the respondents in RA, a more enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem would improve the private sector's export capacity. All the obstacles and challenges in the entrepreneurial process cited above and more are engendered. In the sense that the Rapid Assessment undertaken within the context of the project confirmed differences in experiences between women and men entrepreneurs. With regards to challenges men cited difficulties in market access and difficulties in access to financing. The perception of barriers to market access regardless of the sector, and of the sex, is essentially related to the lack of knowledge of the regulations governing potential export markets for their products and the level of competition. Women on the other hand, cited more difficulties that they were able to identify in their daily lives and in running their businesses. While they recognized the difficulties in access to finance, they cited lack of support during start-up phase, lack of technical and business training, needs for legal assistance (support in registration process and establishment of contracts) and inevitably work life balance.

The Gender-Sensitive Value Chain Analysis/GSVCA' objective was to assess the competitiveness and performance of a number of value chains in each selected sector/subsector (i.e. Agri-food, Textile and Clothing and ICT) in order to identify actual or potential barriers and opportunities for women and men that might be shaped by custom, law and institutional structure. The GSVCA involved collecting information on relevant entities such as firms, primary input producer groups, households or producer associations, and market connections for a given value chain, clarifying the positions and roles of actors within the chain, and used to better coordinate activities and improve the flow of products/services to the end use, i.e. consumption. Upon finalisation of the data collection phase, the research team interpreted the results and selected a subsector that provides the highest potential for growth and provides the widest opportunities for women and men, noting that the highest the score, the highest probability for the country to succeed in the subsector. A final stage to

²⁰³ <https://imagesmena.org/en/>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.gemconsortium.org/file/open?fileId=50691>

allow the drawing of recommendations, is conduct consultations with stakeholders within the subsector selected as the highest potential to validate the findings and prepare a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to organise the information collected in the previous phase in order to have a more oriented reading of the support criteria necessary to strengthen a value chain.

The results of the GSVCA found that the ICT as a subsector was identified as the subsector with the highest potential in Egypt, especially in light of the COVID-19 that is already fast-tracking digitalisation. The pandemic has seen digital solutions surge globally, with Egypt no exception. Teleworking, e-schooling, online shopping and videoconferencing have forced employees, students, consumers, businesses and families alike to adapt to virtual environments at lightning speed. Internet usage in Egypt has increased markedly, notably the use of mobile applications and educational portals. This change in habits towards digital platforms will likely outlast the current crisis and offers opportunities for an accelerated digital transition.²⁰⁵

2. Recommendations

Egypt's comparative advantage lays in the fact that the country has, on the one hand, an upgraded infrastructure for the development of the sector and, on the other hand, a large number of young graduates in information and communication technologies. This state of affairs offers good prospects for the development of start-ups in the ICT sector. However, young graduates in Information and Communication Technologies have limited knowledge in business creation and management.

To this end, through the Information Technology Industry Development Agency,²⁰⁶ the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology offers a multitude of programmes to support young entrepreneurs such as the Business and Entrepreneurship Education programme. For example, these two programmes provide ICT business training to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) develop new strategies to transform their organisations and businesses through the strategic use of computer and Internet applications, and teach students how to develop business plans for effective IT deployment. It covers business start-up, growth and technology.²⁰⁷

Other opportunities are elegantly offered to young people such as the signing of a cooperation agreement in October 2020 by the Egyptian Institute of Information Technology (IIT) and the technology company Google to launch a programme to train more than 30,000 graduates in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning.²⁰⁸ Finally, the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre's (TIEC) Women Entrepreneurship programme has launched a one-year project entitled "hiya raeda", "she's a leader" programme. Its objective is to train women entrepreneurs in start-up methodologies and concepts, wherever they are in the 27 Egyptian governorates.²⁰⁹

In terms of threats, Egypt is not sufficiently known as a supplier of information and communication technologies and/or as a potential export market, particularly within the European Union. This could be due to the absence of a network, the weakness of lobbying and marketing.

²⁰⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/eb066_en.pdf

²⁰⁶ https://mci.gov.eg/en/Human_Capacity

²⁰⁷ https://www.mci.gov.eg/en/ICT_Industry_Development/Boost_a_Business#tabM

²⁰⁸ <https://www.agenceecofin.com/formation/3010-81934-egypte-30-000-jeunes-seront-formes-dans-le-domaine-de-l-intelligence-artificielle-grace-a-un-partenariat-avec-google>

²⁰⁹ <https://tiiec.gov.eg/English/Programs/She-Program/Pages/default.aspx>

The cross-cutting analysis of the results of the Situation Analysis (quantitative and qualitative), the Rapid Assessment and the GSVCA has brought out a number of concerns and needs as well as priorities as regard to strengthen women's entrepreneurship in the ICT sector as herewith summarised:

- Set up of an information platform to provide women entrepreneurs with up-to-date news and opportunities on supporting programmes for the ICT sector,
- Capacity and skills on business planning including adoption of new technologies in business management such as e-commerce and digital marketing.
- Better access to technical and managerial training to build/reinforce the capacities of women entrepreneurs in business management (e.g. administration, accounting...), human and financial resources management and team building & management,
- Support women entrepreneurs through studies of potential markets for their activities and accompany them in their export activities,
- A better understanding of the regulations governing the company's sector of activity but also a watchful eye to keep the company in compliance with regulatory requirements,
- Networking with other business owners in a collaborative spirit to exchange information and experience on their field and potential opportunities...

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Women, Business and the Law, Egypt 2021²¹⁰

	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	No	Personal Status Law No. 25/1929, as amended by Law No. 100/1985, Art. 1
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	No	Passport application form
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court's Decision No. 243 for Judicial Year No. 21
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	No	Personal Status Law No. 25/1929, as amended by Law No. 100/1985, Art. 1
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Arts. 35, 88 and 120
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Penal Code, Arts. 306 bis (A) and 306 bis (B)
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Criminal : Penal Code, Arts 306 (A) & (B)/ Civil: No applicable provisions could be located
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	No	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 89
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	No	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 90
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	No	Decree of Minister of Manpower and Immigration No. 183 of 2003, Arts 1, 1(3), 2(A), 2(B), Decree of Minister of Manpower and Immigration No. 155 of 2003, Art; Lanour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 90
Marriage	Is there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?	No	Personal Status Law No. 25/1929, as amended by Law No. 100/1985, Art. 11 bis (2)
	Can a woman be "head of household" or "head of family" in the same way as a man?	No	Civil Status Law No. 260/1960, Art. 44(3)
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Ministerial Decree No. 827/2021, Art. 1

²¹⁰ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35094>

	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	No	Personal Status Law No. 25/1929, Arts. 1 to 5; Law No. 1/2000, Arts. 20-21
	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	No	Law No. 1/2000, on Personal Status Procedure; Arts. 20-21
Parenthood	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 91
	Does the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Child Law No. 12/1996, Arts. 70-72; Social Insurance and Pension Law No. 148 of 2019, Art. 77
	Is there paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 120
Entrepreneurship	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	No	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Assets	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Civil Code, Art. 44
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	No	Inheritance Law No. 77/1943, Arts. 16-19
	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	No	Inheritance Law No. 77/1943, Art. 11
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Personal Status Law No. 1/2000, Art. 3
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Pension	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 125; Social Insurance and Pension Law No. 148 of 2019, Art. 21(1)
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Art. 125
	Are periods of absence from work due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	Child Law No. 12 of 1996, Art. 72

Annex 2: 2021 WBL Index Score for Egypt²¹¹

WBL Indicator	Components measure	Rate
The Mobility indicator measures constraints on a woman's agency and freedom of movement, both of which are likely to influence her decision to enter the labor force and engage in entrepreneurial activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether a woman can choose where to live in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman can travel outside her home in the same way as a man ••Whether a woman can apply for a passport in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman can travel outside the country in the same way as a man. 	50
The Workplace indicator analyzes laws affecting women's decisions to enter the labor market, including women's legal capacity and ability to work, as well as protections in the workplace against discrimination and sexual harassment. <i>Antidiscrimination legislation is positively associated with women's employment and earnings, whereas sexual harassment can negatively influence women's career trajectories</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether a woman can get a job in the same way as a man ••Whether the law prohibits discrimination in employment based on gender. ••Whether there is legislation on sexual harassment in employment. ••Whether there are criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment. 	75
The Pay indicator measures laws affecting occupational segregation and the gender wage gap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether the law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value. ••Whether a woman can work at night in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman can work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman can work in an industrial job in the same way as a man. 	0
The Marriage indicator measures legal constraints related to marriage and divorce. <i>Legal discrimination against women, including limits on their ability to be head of household, has been found to be negatively correlated with labor force participation. Unequal rights in marriage and divorce can also have negative effects on women's intrahousehold bargaining power and jeopardize their financial security when a divorce is finalized.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether there is no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband. ••Whether a woman can be head of household in the same way as a man. ••Whether there is legislation specifically addressing domestic violence. ••Whether a woman can obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman has the same rights to remarry as a man. 	0
The Parenthood indicator examines laws affecting women's work during and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether paid leave of at least 14 weeks is available to mothers. 	20

²¹¹ <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl>

<p>after pregnancy. Women are more likely to return to work if the law mandates maternity leave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether the government administers 100% of maternity leave benefits. ••Whether paid leave is available to fathers. ••Whether there is paid parental leave. ••Whether dismissal of pregnant workers is prohibited. 	
<p>The Entrepreneurship indicator measures constraints on women starting and running a business. Having access to a bank account is strongly correlated with women’s labor supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether the law prohibits discrimination in access to credit based on gender. ••Whether a woman can sign a contract in the same way as a man ••Whether a woman can register a business in the same way as a man. ••Whether a woman can open a bank account in the same way as a man. 	75
<p>The Assets indicator examines gender differences in property and inheritance law.</p> <p><i>Improving property and inheritance rights is positively associated with female earnings and employment as well as women’s access to housing and land.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property. ••Whether sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents. ••Whether male and female surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets. ••Whether the law grants spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage. ••Whether the law provides for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions. 	40
<p>The Pension indicator assesses laws affecting the size of a woman’s pension.</p> <p><i>Early retirement can widen the potential gender gap in pension levels and increase women’s risk of poverty in old age</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ••Whether the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits is the same. ••Whether the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits is the same. ••Whether the mandatory retirement age for men and women is the same. ••Whether periods of absence from work due to childcare are taken into account in pension benefits 	100

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