



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



MEDAWEEK BARCELONA 2017
Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders

Women Entrepreneurship & Investment Programme 2017

BUYERS' WORKSHOP

Promoting women-led businesses' access to market



23 NOVEMBER 2017 | BARCELONA, SPAIN

With the financial support from:



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Promoting MENA women-led businesses' access to market

1. Background

Since February 2015, UNIDO is implementing a flagship project in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Algeria (who recently joined) with the objective to support women economic empowerment through entrepreneurship development. The project “Promoting Women Empowerment (PWE) for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in the MENA Region” (phase I), funded by the Italian Government and labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean, aims (1) to support, facilitate and nurture the policy dialogue between key stakeholders to ultimately foster women economic empowerment in the MENA region, (2) strengthen the capacities of national professional women’s associations to provide female entrepreneurs with higher-quality and demand-driven services to support the creation and growth of their enterprises and (3) to promote promising women-led investments in the target countries through training, coaching, identification and facilitation of business partnerships opportunities and access to finance. The project’s institutional framework relies on strong partnerships with the Ministries of Industries and women’s business associations of the beneficiary countries.

A survey conducted by UNIDO on 1210 women entrepreneurs - as part of the project’s activities - revealed that the main challenges faced by women entrepreneurs for growing their businesses were access to finance and access to new and international markets¹. Women-led businesses are in fact generally unable to take advantage of market opportunities that require large volumes of production, broad product range, regular supply, compliance to standards as well as quality and design requirements. Women entrepreneurs themselves often lack networks, information and marketing skills and have little access to expertise and finance. As a result, they are generally unable to enter the global circuits of production and sale. This may even be more complicated when women face mobility constraints, for either legal, social or political motives, as it is the case for many women in the MENA region, particularly in rural areas. Facilitating market access for women producers is then critical on both supply (access to inputs) and delivery (access to end users) sides.

¹ UNIDO (2017): A study on women entrepreneurship development in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia – Technical Paper, 29 p.

2. Objective of the workshop

The workshop will bring together women entrepreneurs with relevant experience on the international market, European buyers with an acute knowledge of the European market and its requirements and an audience of women entrepreneurs. The former will share their experiences/success stories and shed light on the challenges women entrepreneurs in the region face in terms of access to market and on how to overcome the difficulties and take advantage of the opportunities. On the other side, European buyers will provide insights on how to identify and seize market opportunities in Europe, with focus on the agri-food and creative industries sectors.

The session will be conducted in an interactive way, giving room to Questions and Answers as well as networking.

The expected outcomes of the workshop will be:

- To promote an increased awareness of the challenges and opportunities women entrepreneurs face in terms of access to market and foster the debate on measures that can promote their participation in the global supply chains.
- To create awareness of the requirements of the international market with specific focus on the agri-food and creative industries sectors.
- To facilitate sharing of best practices of successful women entrepreneurs as role models with counterparts of the MENA region.
- To create networking opportunities

3. Date and Venue

The workshop will take place on 23rd of November 2017, from 3.30 PM to 6.30 PM at **Casa Llotja de Mar, Barcelona, Spain.**

4. Program

Chair	Monica Carco – UNIDO Project Manager
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Noora Abdeen Khalifeh, Founder and Designer, Noora Heritage House (Palestine)• Mrs. Samia Azmeh, Senior Business and eCommerce Expert (Switzerland)• Ms. Annette Spanggaard, Founder and CEO, Pearl Stories (Denmark)• Mr. Gianluca Bozzia, Fair Trade developer and fund raiser, Chico Mendes Altromercato (Italy)• Mr. Husam Al Dakak, Expert sourcing and purchase (Fresh Sector), Import Promotion Desk - IPD (Germany)