



الاتحاد المصرفي العربي
Union of Arab Banks



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



STRATEGIC PARTNER



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



INSPIREHER
TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL ACCESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN THE MENA REGION

INSPIREHER CONTEST

TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL ACCESS
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE MENA REGION





INSPIREHER: TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL ACCESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE MENA REGION

The Union of Arab Banks (UAB) has long been a strong advocate for financial inclusion and economic development across the MENA region. Despite their immense potential, women entrepreneurs continue to face significant barriers in accessing financial services and business opportunities. To address these challenges, "Revue UBA," the French magazine of UAB, is partnering with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), to create a more supportive environment for women entrepreneurs. With UfM as the main partner, the magazine has launched a competition aimed at showcasing and supporting initiatives that promote financial inclusion and entrepreneurship among women in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya.

The "InspireHer" Contest by "Revue UBA" represents a significant step towards promoting financial inclusion and entrepreneurship among women in the MENA region. By showcasing success stories, encouraging innovative solutions that address both access to finance and business development, and providing necessary support, this initiative aims to create a more inclusive and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Together, we can empower women entrepreneurs to drive economic growth and development in the MENA region.

SDG ALIGNMENT

The "InspireHer" contest is an initiative that supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 5, which promotes gender equality and empowers all women and girls, and SDG 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. By fostering financial inclusion and entrepreneurship among women, this contest contributes to creating a more equitable and economically empowered MENA region.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Raise Awareness:** Highlight the importance of financial inclusion and entrepreneurship for women in the MENA region.
- **Identify Challenges:** Understand the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing financial services.
- **Showcase Success Stories:** Celebrate successful women entrepreneurs who have overcome barriers to financial inclusion.
- **Promote Innovative Solutions:** Encourage innovative approaches and solutions that facilitate financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs.
- **Network Building:** Create an online platform for networking and knowledge-sharing among women entrepreneurs, financial institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders. This platform will facilitate connections, exchange of best practices, and collaboration, fostering a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in the MENA region.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Women entrepreneurs in the following countries: **Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya.**



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**FINALISTS WILL BE CHOSEN
TO PRESENT THEIR PROJECTS
AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY.**

COMPETITION STRUCTURE:

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS:

Open to women entrepreneurs from the following countries: Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya. Participants must either be founders or CEOs of startups, or represent MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) that have already launched an initiative. We also welcome submissions from those planning to launch new projects that address financial inclusion challenges (e.g., improving access to financial services) or entrepreneurial activities aimed at women's economic empowerment. Applicants may submit a business plan or a project proposal, highlighting either ongoing initiatives or innovative new ideas.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- **Innovation:** Novelty and originality of the business idea or solution.
- **Impact:** Potential positive impact on financial inclusion and women empowerment.
- **Feasibility:** Practicality and sustainability of the business model.
- **Scalability:** Potential for growth and replication in other parts of the MENA region.

JUDGING PANEL:

Comprising experts from the banking sector, successful women entrepreneurs, academics, and representatives from international organizations.



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INSPIREHER CONTEST CATEGORIES AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

INSPIREHER: NEW VENTURE CATEGORY

ELIGIBILITY:

Open to women entrepreneurs who are in the first 0 to 2 years of launching a new project that addresses financial inclusion challenges or promotes women's economic empowerment. operating in one of the eligible countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya).

FINANCIAL PRIZES:

- **First Prize:**
Grant: \$3000 to support initial business setup, marketing, and operational costs.
- **Second Prize:**
Grant: \$2000 for business expansion and strategy implementation.
- **Third Prize:**
Grant: \$1500 for operational support and initial market entry.



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INSPIREHER CONTEST CATEGORIES AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

INSPIREHER: ESTABLISHED BUSINESS CATEGORY

ELIGIBILITY:

Open to founders or CEOs of startups or MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) that have been established between 1 and 3 years and are actively operating in one of the eligible countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya).

FINANCIAL PRIZES:

- **First Prize:**
Grant: \$3000 to fund business expansion, new product development, or strategic initiatives.
- **Second Prize:**
Grant: \$2000 to enhance market presence, scale operations, or support other growth-related expenses.
- **Third Prize:**
Grant: \$1500 to support operational costs or market entry strategies.



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INSPIREHER CONTEST CATEGORIES AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

INSPIREHER: WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR AWARD 2025

ELIGIBILITY:

This special award will recognize an outstanding woman entrepreneur, chosen from applicants of the InspireHer contest's two main categories—InspireHer: New Venture Category and InspireHer : Established Business Category. Additionally, it is also open to exceptional women entrepreneurs who have not applied for these categories but demonstrate a significant impact in advancing financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment.

GRANT:

\$2000 in financial support to empower the awardee to expand or innovate her business, enabling further impact in her community and beyond.

VISIBILITY PACKAGE FOR THE 3 CATEGORIES

- **Feature in Revue UAB:** Profiled in an exclusive article in Revue UAB to showcase the entrepreneur's journey, vision, and project.
- **Social Media Promotion:** Highlighted across Union of Arab Banks' social media channels, elevating visibility and recognition within the MENA region's banking and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES BY UNIDO OFFERED FOR THE 3 CATEGORIES

In addition to financial grants, winners and finalists will benefit from specialized capacity-building programs provided by UNIDO, including:

- Workshop on Pitching Skills to enhance business presentation and fundraising capabilities.
- Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion Program, covering key topics such as Business Planning, Financial & Business Development Strategies, Innovation & Digital Transformation, Sustainability & Impact Measurement, and Market Access & Networking.
- 6-month tailored business counseling and mentorship to provide strategic guidance and hands-on support for business growth.
- Participation in the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum (WEIF 2026), offering networking opportunities with global investors, financial institutions, and industry leaders.

These unique opportunities will equip participants with essential skills, knowledge, and networks to scale their businesses and achieve long-term success.



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TIMELINE:

- **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS:** 24 March 2025
- **SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** 24 April 2025
- **EVALUATION:** May 2025
- **ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINALISTS:** June 2025
- **AWARDS CEREMONY & NETWORKING EVENT:**
16 - 17 July 2025

*** The awards ceremony will be held during the UfM Women Business Forum on July 16-17, 2025, in Palermo, Italy. This prestigious event will bring together women entrepreneurs, financial institutions, policymakers, and industry leaders from across the region to celebrate and recognize the achievements of the winners.*

JOIN US IN EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS!

By participating in the "InspireHer: Transforming Financial Access and Entrepreneurship in the MENA region" contest, you contribute to a movement that fosters financial inclusion and entrepreneurship for women in the MENA region. Together, we can create a future where women entrepreneurs thrive & drive sustainable economic growth.

For any information, please feel free to contact us at the following email address:
InspireHer.contest@uabonline.org.



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CONTEST GUIDELINES

INSPIREHER: **TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL ACCESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE MENA REGION**

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

By participating in "InspireHer," you contribute to fostering a brighter future for women entrepreneurs across the MENA region. Together, we can drive sustainable growth and empower women to transform their communities through innovation and entrepreneurship.



INSPIREHER: TRANSFORMING FINANCIAL ACCESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE MENA REGION

CONTEST GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. WHO CAN APPLY?

- **New Venture Category:**

This category is open to women entrepreneurs who are founders, CEOs, or managing directors of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya. Eligible businesses must be within their first 0-2 years of operation.

- **Established Business Category:**

This category is open to women entrepreneurs who are founders, CEOs, or managing directors of MSMEs operating in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya, with businesses that have been in operation for 1-3 years.

- **InspireHer: Women Entrepreneur Award 2025:**

Open to outstanding women entrepreneurs in any of the above categories. Additionally, other women entrepreneurs from the eight eligible countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya) can be nominated or self-nominate for this award if they demonstrate a notable impact in advancing financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

Projects must focus on financial inclusion or women's economic empowerment, with an emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and community impact.



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CONTEST GUIDELINES

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- **Business Plan or Project Proposal (Maximum 15 pages, including visuals):**
 1. Executive Summary: Overview of your project.
 2. Business Model: Structure, target market, and revenue generation strategy.
 3. Market Analysis: Market position, competition, and customer needs.
 4. Financial Projections: Expected costs, revenue, and profitability.
 5. Impact Assessment: How the project contributes to financial inclusion and empowerment of women.
- **Founder Biography:**
Brief background of the founder or team.
- **Business Registration Documents** (if applicable).
- **Additional for InspireHer: Women Entrepreneur Award Nominees:**
 1. A Personal Statement (up to 500 words) describing the nominee's journey, challenges, and impact achieved through her business.
 2. Evidence of Impact: Supporting documents, such as testimonials, media features, or performance metrics demonstrating the business's positive impact on women's empowerment and community development.

LANGUAGE OF SUBMISSION

- Submissions must be in English or French.

SUBMISSION METHOD & FORMAT

- Applications should be submitted via the contest email InspireHer.contest@uabonline.org by 24 April 2025.
- Ensure that all required documents are included in a single PDF file.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

- The final date for submission is **24 April 2025**.
- Late entries will not be accepted.



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CONTEST GUIDELINES

EVALUATION CRITERIA

**NEW VENTURE
AND
ESTABLISHED
BUSINESS
CATEGORIES:**

1. **Innovation:** Originality and creativity.
2. **Impact:** Contribution to financial inclusion and women's empowerment.
3. **Feasibility:** Practicality and sustainability.
4. **Scalability:** Potential for expansion within the region.
5. **Presentation Quality:** Clarity, coherence, and thoroughness of the proposal.

**INSPIREHER:
WOMEN
ENTREPRENEUR
AWARD 2025:**

1. **Impact:** Significant, measurable impact on financial inclusion and/or women's empowerment.
2. **Leadership:** Demonstrated leadership qualities, resilience, and dedication.
3. **Community Influence:** Positive influence and reputation within her community or industry.
4. **Growth Potential:** Capacity for the business to continue its impact on a larger scale.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. **INITIAL SCREENING:** Review for completeness and eligibility.
2. **EVALUATION:** A panel of experts will assess qualified entries based on the above criteria.
3. **FINALISTS:** Selected finalists will present their projects at the awards ceremony in 16 July 2025.

For any information, please feel free to contact us at the following email address: InspireHer.contest@uabonline.org.