World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2024: Achieving the SDGs through Fostering Innovation and Economic Growth

Manama - May 14 to 16, 2024

We are pleased to announce that the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2024 (WEIF) will take place in Manama on May 14 to 16, concurrently with the Arab Leaders Summit 2024, building on the successes of the WEIF in 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022. The WEIF is facilitated by the General Secretariat at the UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office in the Kingdom of Bahrain in partnerships with the League of Arab States, the Union of Arab Chambers, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and a number of local, regional and international partners.

With the theme "Achieving the SDGs through Fostering Innovation and Economic Growth", WEIF 2024 aspires to address global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, peace, and justice; within the backdrop of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Innovation and economic growth are critical enablers for achieving the SDGs. Innovation can lead to the development of new technologies, products, and services that can address social and environmental challenges. Economic growth can provide the resources needed to invest in sustainable development initiatives.

Fostering innovation and economic growth requires a multifaceted approach that includes:

1. Promoting entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs are the drivers of innovation. Governments can create conducive ecosystems and an enabling environment for entrepreneurship by providing access to smart finance, capacity building, incubation, networking, and mentorship.
2. Encouraging partnerships, collaboration and knowledge sharing: Collaboration between entrepreneurs, MSMEs, government, academia, and civil society in different sectors is essential for fostering innovation.
3. Investing in research and development (R&D): Governments, businesses, and universities can all play a role in increasing investment in R&D. This can lead to the development of new technologies that can help to solve some of the world's most pressing problems.
4. Creating a Culture of Innovation: Cultivating a culture that values creativity, risk-taking, and collaboration is crucial for fostering innovation. This can be

achieved by promoting open communication, encouraging experimentation, and rewarding innovative ideas.

By fostering innovation and economic growth, we can create a more sustainable and equitable world for all.

WEIF 2024 topics and panels

WEIF 2024 will constitute three major pillars a Conference, Arab African Empowering Innovation Competition and a Smart Zone Expo.

Following the general theme of the Forum, WEIF will cover the following important subjects listed below. Furthermore, it will concentrate on the Arab World and Sub-Saharan Africa, two important regions, while maintaining a global perspective.

In addition to gender parity and the participation of entrepreneurs, each of these suggested panels will have a main technical organizing partner and a geographical balance of speakers from the Arab Region and Sub-Saharan Africa.

A. Conference Sessions

1. Arab African Ministerial Panel
2. Building Sustainable Partnerships, Creating a Brighter Future for Arab and African Entrepreneurs
3. Entrepreneurship and innovation Conducive Ecosystems; were Ideas Forge into Reality
4. Smart sustainable financial inclusion
5. Enriching Lives, Empowering Dreams: A Collaborative Journey towards Economic Independence and Inclusive Living for Persons with Determination
6. Harnessing the Power of Nature: A Sustainable Future for the Green and Blue Economy
7. Disruption and Innovation: Entrepreneurs as Pioneers of the Digital Frontier
8. Trade and Heritage Meets Innovation: Unleashing the Creative Orange Potential
9. Universities, Educational Institutions and Research centers at the Forefront of Entrepreneurship and innovation
10. Harnessing Agricultural Technology for Food Security

Proposed Session briefs

1. **Arab African Ministerial Panel**
2. **Building Sustainable Partnerships, Creating a Brighter Future for Arab and African Entrepreneurs**
3. **Entrepreneurship and innovation Conducive Ecosystems; Were Ideas Forge into Reality**

Within the framework of the "Global SME Coalition for Africa" led by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa; In addition to the need to ensure the development of the private sector by establishing links, joint investments and facilitating trade between Arab and African entrepreneurs to achieve common prosperity for all, these sessions come in line with the declaration of the seventeenth special session of the African Union Conference on Industrialization and Economic Diversification; Which was held in Niger on November 25, 2022.

Within this context three panels aim to address;

- Entrepreneurship, innovation and private sector development as drivers of change for Africa
- Financing and resource mobilization towards achieving inclusive financial access linked to de-risking entrepreneurs and MSMEs
- Regional value chains and special economic zones vis-à-vis ensuring conducive ecosystems for domestic investment based on practical incubation management systems
- Sharing best practices and experiences from Africa and the Arab Region on the means of stimulating and unleashing entrepreneurship, joint investments and trade
- Deliberating on the challenges, opportunities, threats, and the road forward towards achieving the Arab - African economic integration
- Developing an action plan to facilitate the implementation of the global SMEs coalition mandate

Further to the above, and in the context of the global economic reality present today from the Ukraine conflict; to the post COVID recovery; leading to the swift digitalization efforts have led to global supply chain distributions. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and the ecosystems in the Arab Region and Africa are struggling to cope with these pressing challenges. Hence, this calls for a holistic approach to ensure that sustainability and inclusive survival and growth of these MSMEs is addressed by all stakeholders namely public, private and developmental institutions. It also requires creating stronger integration and partnerships between MSMEs and entrepreneurs in Africa and the Arab Region.

Building on the leading role played by BADEA in the economic empowerment of African entrepreneurs and the need to create linkages and synergies between the Arab Region and Sub-Saharan Africa, it is evident that these three major sessions will be jointly organized in close partnership with BADEA, the League of Arab States and the Union of Arab Chambers.

4. Smart sustainable financial inclusion

In line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/202 entitled "Entrepreneurship for Development"; and the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum - Manama Declaration 2015 themed “Entrepreneurship for Development” submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UNGA, under agenda item 19 reference A/69/748; the Government of Bahrain jointly through its strategic partnership with UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office in Bahrain (ITPO Bahrain) propose convening a high-level side event during the 78th session of the UNGA under the theme “Sustainable Financial Inclusion: Achieving the SDGs through Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Investment”

As the world transforms, entrepreneurs seek new innovative modes of finance to ensure their resilience and grow sustainably further. The panel will address; How can digitalization facilitate financial inclusion? What new modes of smart financing are there for start-ups and MSMEs? What do you believe is the future of inclusive sustainable finance? What role can private banks and developmental funds play to achieve financial inclusion?

5. **Enriching Lives, Empowering Dreams: A Collaborative Journey towards Economic Independence and Inclusive Living for Persons with Determination**

Within the framework of the successes achieved in the previous two editions in both the United Arab Emirates and the State of Qatar, the Independent Living Initiative seeks to achieve economic empowerment for people with disabilities, this dialogue session will be organized to complete the development and practical programs that contribute to the advancement of people with disabilities in Arab countries. WEIF will also include an accompanying exhibition of modern technology for people with disabilities, in addition to an exhibition of projects that qualified in the Independent Living Competition.

6. **Harnessing the Power of Nature: A Sustainable Future for the Green and Blue Economy**

As the world grapples with the pressing challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity, the concept of Harnessing the Power of Nature has emerged as a promising pathway towards a more sustainable future. This approach advocates for leveraging nature's inherent resilience and regenerative capacity to drive economic growth and prosperity while safeguarding the environment.

These two dimensions converge in the concept of a "Blue-Green Economy", which seeks to harmonize economic development with the protection and sustainable use of both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

What are the specific nature-based solutions that can be applied in different sectors, such as agriculture, energy, and infrastructure? How can we balance economic growth

with the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity? What role can technology play in advancing nature-based solutions and accelerating the transition to a sustainable future? How can we engage and empower communities to become active participants in the Green and Blue Economy? What individual actions can we take to contribute to a more sustainable future based on Harnessing the Power of Nature?

7. Disruption, Innovation and Smart Manufacturing: Entrepreneurs as Pioneers of the Digital Frontier

In the era of Industry 4.0, where technological advancements are redefining the manufacturing landscape, entrepreneurs stand as pioneers charting the course towards a future of disruption, innovation, and smart manufacturing. As visionary leaders, entrepreneurs are poised to revolutionize traditional manufacturing processes, harnessing the power of digital technologies to enhance efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. But what exactly does this transformative journey entail? What are the key challenges and opportunities that entrepreneurs face in navigating the digital frontier? How can they effectively leverage emerging technologies to reshape the manufacturing industry? These questions lie at the heart of understanding the entrepreneurial role in shaping the future of smart manufacturing.

8. Trade and Heritage Meets Innovation: Unleashing the Creative Orange Potential

In 2019, the orange economy was estimated to be worth $2.25 trillion and to account for 3% of global GDP. It is also a major job creator, generating an estimated 30 million jobs worldwide. As per UNESCO, the Orange Economy is growing at a faster rate than the global economy as a whole. It is estimated to grow by 8% per year between 2019 and 2023. The convergence of trade, heritage, and innovation holds immense potential for unlocking the creative potential of the orange fruit. How can we effectively leverage this intersection to foster sustainable economic growth, promote cultural preservation, and enhance the appeal of orange-based products in the global market? What innovative approaches can be employed to integrate traditional craftsmanship with modern technologies, thereby revitalizing heritage-rich orange production practices? How can we harness the power of storytelling and branding to showcase the unique cultural narratives associated with orange cultivation and consumption across diverse regions? What strategies can be implemented to cultivate a thriving community of orange artisans and entrepreneurs, empowering them to transform their creative ideas into viable and marketable enterprises?

9. Universities, Educational Institutions and Research centers at the Forefront of Entrepreneurship and innovation

Universities, educational institutions, and research centers play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, laying the foundation for groundbreaking ideas and transformative ventures. These institutions act as catalysts for creative thinking, providing students with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to become successful entrepreneurs. Several questions arise when examining the intersection of education and innovation: How can universities effectively nurture an entrepreneurial mindset among their students? What specific programs and initiatives are institutions implementing to promote innovation and startup creation? How can research centers bridge the gap between academia and industry, translating cutting-edge research into marketable products and services? What collaborations and partnerships are emerging between universities, businesses, and government agencies to foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem?

10. Harnessing Agricultural Technology for Food Security

With the global population projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, ensuring food security for all is a critical challenge. Agricultural technology (AgTech) offers a promising solution to address this challenge by increasing productivity, efficiency, and sustainability in the agricultural sector. How can AgTech help achieve food security? What are the challenges of adopting AgTech? How can we overcome these challenges? What effects on Climate Change?

B. Entrepreneur to Entrepreneur bilateral meetings and matchmaking

In order to promote bankable investment opportunities and foster trade connections between entrepreneurs, investors, innovators, and MSMEs from the pool of participating nations, particularly from the Arab and African Region, WEIF seeks to act as a hybrid platform for networking and matching.

C. Official launch of the International Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The proposed International Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment (ICEI) is a natural evolution and progression of the Arab Regional Center for Entrepreneurship and Investment that is backed by over 22 years of hands-on technical assistance programs in the area of entrepreneurship development and investment promotion.

ICEI is an independent center, currently registered in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a non-profit company.

ICEI's main mandate is to

1. Assist and support the existence of eco-systems for the development of micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) through capacity building programs, technology transfer, financing and incubation management systems

2. Promote the economic empowerment of youth and women regionally and internationally.

3. Facilitate joint investment, partnerships and collaboration between entrepreneurs at a global stage with special focus on Arab and African Entrepreneurs both start-ups and growth, MSMEs and Investors

Main Organizers and Partners

- League of Arab States
- Union of Arab Chambers
- Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
- UNIDO ITPO Bahrain
- Bahrain Chamber
- Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
- Qatar Development Bank
- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
- Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum
- Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- Creative Business Network
- Annual Investment Meeting Congress
- Shenzhen Federation for Entrepreneurship Promotion
- Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United Nations Media, New York

WEIF Background

Since its first edition in 2015, the Forum has achieved great achievements to become the main forum designated for investment for entrepreneurs by the United Nations. The Forum succeeded in being a platform for exchanging best international practices and experiences on means of developing appropriate and stimulating environmental systems for local investment and linking them to foreign investment with the aim of achieving economic empowerment. Through entrepreneurship and innovation. It focused on the global sustainable development agenda and comprehensive and sustainable industrial development by leveraging the power of the private sector by stimulating and unleashing the economic empowerment of youth and women. The forum also seeks to connect entrepreneurs from all over the world with their counterparts to achieve partnerships and develop bilateral investments.

The Forum directly seeks to (1) exchange international best practices and exchange experiences on means of developing an optimal enabling ecosystem that will unleash domestic investment and benefit from foreign direct investment through entrepreneurship, innovation and impact investments; (2) Establishing investment

and commercial links and partnerships between entrepreneurs from all over the world.

The Forum also enjoys the support of a large number of local, regional and international partners, including: Ministries, governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, development financial institutions, regional and international organizations, commercial banks, universities, small and medium enterprise support institutions, research centers, think tanks, incubators, accelerators, chambers of commerce and industry, among others.

In light of the rapid changes and technological challenges that the world is experiencing, it is necessary for decision makers and stakeholders to ensure that the environmental systems in their countries adapt quickly and embrace this transformation. In order to maintain sustainability and develop new tools that will enhance and facilitate ecosystems conducive to unleashing entrepreneurship, local and foreign investment, innovation and digital transformation, especially in the Arab region and Africa; Thus, building a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Through its various initiatives, WEIF plays a significant role in fostering and driving economic growth, innovation and promoting sustainable development. The forum's impact is evident in the numerous successful businesses and social enterprises that have emerged from its network. WEIF continues to be a leading force in the global entrepreneurship landscape, connecting innovators with investors, fostering collaboration, and empowering entrepreneurs to make a positive impact on the world.

WEIF statistics in its four previous editions (2015, 2017, 2019, and 2022)



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

UNIDO NETWORK OF INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION OFFICES
BAHRAIN

world Entrepreneurs Investment forum

World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2024
May 14 to 16, 2024 - Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Information about the Entrepreneur

1. Entrepreneur Name (As Written in Passport):		
2. Address and Country:		
3. Nationality:		**4. Age:** **5. Gender:**
6. Tel:	**7. Mobile:**	**8. E-mail:**
9. Company Name: **10. Position in Company:**		**11. Company Website:** **12. social media:**

13. Business Sector (Please Tick):

- ☐ Agribusiness / Agritech
- ☐ Environment & Renewable Energy
- ☐ Green and Blue Industry
- ☐ Creative Industry – Orange Economy
- ☐ Smart Technology, Artificial intelligence, and ICT
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Trade & Heritage – Tourism
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Adaptive technologies and Products for People with Disability

- ☐ Other (Please Specify):

14. Brief Description of your current Products and Services:

15. Year Established:	**16. Current No. of Employees:**
17. Estimated Annual Turnover (US$):	**18. Export:**

19. Present Ownership Structure:

Local Private: % **Local Public: %** **Foreign: %**

20. What are you expecting to gain by attending the forum?

21. Collaborations sought:

Estimate Size of Investment USD:

- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Management expertise
- ☐ Technology transfer
- ☐ Joint-venture
- ☐ Financing
- ☐ Marketing expertise
- ☐ Equipment purchase
- ☐ Market access
- ☐ Joint R&D
- ☐ Buy-back arrangement
- ☐ Technical expertise
- ☐ Sub-contracting

Other (Please Specify):

Please attach in addition to this form

1. ***Scanned Personal Photo with white background***
2. ***Scanned copy of your valid passport not less than 12 months expiry date***