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**MASHREQ GENDER FACILITY**

**A Call for Collective Actionto Empower Mashreq Women, Transforming Country Economies**

Through 3 Pillars: Dialogue & Participation | Data & Knowledge | Innovating for Results

**March 2019**



**Abbreviations**

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| --- | --- |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DT | Disruptive Technologies |
| FCV | Fragility, Conflict and Violence |
| FY | Fiscal Year (for the WBG, July 1 to June 30) |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GIL | Gender Innovations Lab |
| IDP | Internally Displaced People |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation (private sector arm of the World Bank Group) |
| LFP | Labor Force Participation |
| MGF | Mashreq Gender Facility |
| MNA | Middle East and North Africa region |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PDO | Project Development Objective |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| UFGE | Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality |
| WB | World Bank (comprised by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development -IBRD, and the International Development Association -IDA) |
| WBG | World Bank Group (comprised by World Bank, IFC, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency -MIGA, and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes -ICSID) |
| WDI | World Development Indicators |
| WEEAP | Women’s Economic Empowerment Action Plan |
| We-Fi | Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative |
| WVS | World Value Survey |

1. **Background**

**Gender equality is smart economics, contributing to poverty reduction, strengthening resilience and boosting shared prosperity**. Empowering women and girls has an intrinsic value and is instrumental to achieve more inclusive institutions, sound policies, and effective development outcomes.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the Middle East and North Africa (MNA) region important gains have been made in women’s access to education and health, but persistent challenges remain in the areas of women’s economic opportunities, voice and agency. Furthermore, context-specific problems need to be addressed, especially in the face of fragility and conflict.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Increased female economic participation in the MNA region would contribute to inclusive growth, and to help grow the middle class.** Women only generate 18 percent of GDP in MNA, compared to a world average of 37 percent, and increasing female labor force participation to the levels of men could boost regional GDP by 47 percent.[[3]](#footnote-3) In the Mashreq countries, around 1 in 5 women work.[[4]](#footnote-4) While both men and women value the importance of work in life, women are considerably less likely to work (Figure 1). Women are more likely to be unemployed than men, and young women are particularly affected by this. In Jordan, 57 percent of women ages 15 to 24 are unemployed, compared to 31 percent of men the same age. In Iraq these figures are 56 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Furthermore, women tend to be concentrated in low productivity sectors: In Iraq, 44 percent of employed women work in agriculture, compared to 16 percent of men; and of women who work in Lebanon and Jordan over 90 percent work in service sectors. Legally, there are certain restrictions related to areas and tasks in which women can work in all three countries. Women also have less access to formal financial services. In addition, outcomes seem to be correlated with the larger issue of norms and stereotypes related to women’s role in society, further evidenced by low political representation, a low share of women at top management positions in firms, and overall restrictive attitudes around gender roles regarding women’s economic activity.

**The conflict and fragility context, with the elevated number of refugees and displaced persons in the region, affects boys and girls, men and women in different ways.** Both men and women face conflict related gender-based violence: men and boys are involved in violent conflict, are at risk of death, severe injuries and mental trauma, while women and girls are at higher risk for sexual violence and harassment, trafficking and rape. Refugee and displaced women's economic opportunity and human capital accumulation are particularly affected by social constraints and preferences, concerns around safe mobility and challenges in accessing information and institutions. There is an increase in the share of female-headed households among refugee populations in Lebanon and Jordan, and evidence shows that these are more vulnerable to poverty and adopt more severe coping strategies than male-headed households.[[5]](#footnote-5) At the same time, this context of changing roles and responsibilities provides an opportunity to engage women and girls in economic activities. There has been a surge in child marriages, representing 32 percent of Syrian marriages in Jordan, more than double the Syria 2006 data.[[6]](#footnote-6) Moreover, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts towards a new inclusive social contract, should not only take into account different needs and demands of men and women, but also make a concerted effort to include women in decision-making processes. Studies show that actively engaging women in peace processes can lead to 20 percent increase in probability of a peace deal lasting at least two years.[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. **Objective**

**The main objective of the Facility, a first of its kind specifically designed for the Mashreq region, is to enhance women’s economic empowerment as a catalyst towards more inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful societies, where economic growth benefits all.** The Facility will do this throughi) creating an enabling environment for relevant stakeholders to effectively identify and address gender constraints to women’s full participation in society; and, ii) improving women’s access to economic opportunities in the Mashreq.

An **effective communications strategy**, and the **harnessing of new technologies** will be key cross-cutting enablers to ensure maximum engagement and outreach and continuous, adaptive learning; to encourage participation of young women and men and non-traditional partners; to bring attention to and bridge the rural-urban divide; to build a broader in-country and cross-country dialogue and learning; and to generate innovative solutions.

1. **Value Proposition**

In the Mashreq, there is a momentum of increased visibility of women’s participation in the public sphere. A more enabling environment for women’s role in society is in the making, with important legal and institutional changes and numerous initiatives and programs that support women’s economic activity. However, countries have limited technical and financial resources to effectively coordinate and implement the changes put forth, and gender equality issues are sometimes led by institutions that do not necessarily sit at the center of decision making within governments, at the risk of becoming sidelined.

Having a dedicated facility to focus attention, efforts, and resources on this agenda would provide a series of benefits for our client governments, for the donor community, and most importantly, for the Mashreq women:

* **Elevating the dialogue and strengthening the ownership of the gender agenda** among government clients based on new evidence and practical solutions, bringing in key decision-makers from Finance and line Ministries to work along country level authorities responsible for women’s affairs.
* **Enabling a coordinated, more holistic identification and response to key constraints** for women’s economic opportunities, based on cross-sectoral experience and evidence, innovative approaches, learning and international good practices; considering complementarities across stakeholders and initiatives for impactful and transformational results. Given the extremely low economic participation of women in the region, the role of restricting norms will have to be central to make a lasting difference towards more equal societies.
* **Linking to existing WBG lending instruments and analytical tools** which provide entry points for strategic, targeted support on gender. Such linkages create the opportunity to combine public sector, private sector and civil society engagement and coordination for more effective solutions. The WBG further brings technical rigor and experience in managing and coordinating complex platforms, convening international, regional and local stakeholders.
* **Increasing the coordination and effectiveness of international financial support** and reducing transaction costs by pooling operational approaches, risk management and results reporting.

1. **Structure**

The proposed 5-year Facility (2019-2024) will finance technical assistance for strategic **country level and regional** **programs**. The programs will be organized under three, interconnected pillars:

1. **Dialogue & Participation**: building awareness at all levels, convening stakeholders across sectors and segments
2. **Data & Knowledge**: country and regional data and analytics for evidence-based policies
3. **Innovating for Results**: testing and assessing behavioral interventions, support to catalytic initiatives to improve women’s economic opportunities.

Both the country-level work plans and the regional work plans will be discussed by the Steering Committee (see Section 6). The aim is to mobilize US$ 20 million during the first three years to support the program development objectives of the Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF).

1. **Country Programs**

Country programs will be identified through the development of country-level **Women’s Economic Empowerment Action Plans** (WEEAP) for the 5-year period by each of the three Mashreq countries and based on their country priorities and strategies to enhance women’s economic empowerment. In addition, and based on the funding available, countries will present an annual work plan clearly outlining the activities required to progress towards the intermediate outcomes of: (i) strengthened enabling environment with increased capacity for stakeholders to address constraints for women’s economic participation; and, (ii) women’s improved access to economic opportunities. This process will be implemented in three steps:

1. By January 2019 Conference: With support from the WBG team, the governments will prepare a PowerPoint **template that conveys government commitments to increased economic opportunities for women and the vision for the country level action plans**, putting it in the context of existing national strategies and priorities for enhancing women’s economic opportunities.
2. February-May 2019: Governments will develop detailed **5-year WEEAPs** with a theory of change related to the identification of country outputs; indicators; implementation arrangements and responsibilities; and a description of activities to be funded by the Facility (see Figures 2 and 3). The WBG will provide technical support in this process. Each country needs to identify the internal mechanism for endorsement of the plan. Governments will identify potential consultants to work with them to support the development of the annual work plans and the implementation of the action plans.
3. February-May 2019: Based on the amount of initial funding for the Facility and on the priority actions of the WEEAPs, governments will prepare an **annual work plan**. This will be endorsed by the Steering Committee.

Figure 2**. Illustration of the tentative overall Theory of Change**

*The below provides a tentative overall theory of change for creating the enabling environment required to promote women’s economic empowerment and transform the Mashreq towards stronger and more peaceful economies. Each country-level action plan will include a separate, more detailed theory of change based on the country-specific, relevant outcomes identified as priority, as not all immediate outcomes may be selected as priority for all three countries.*

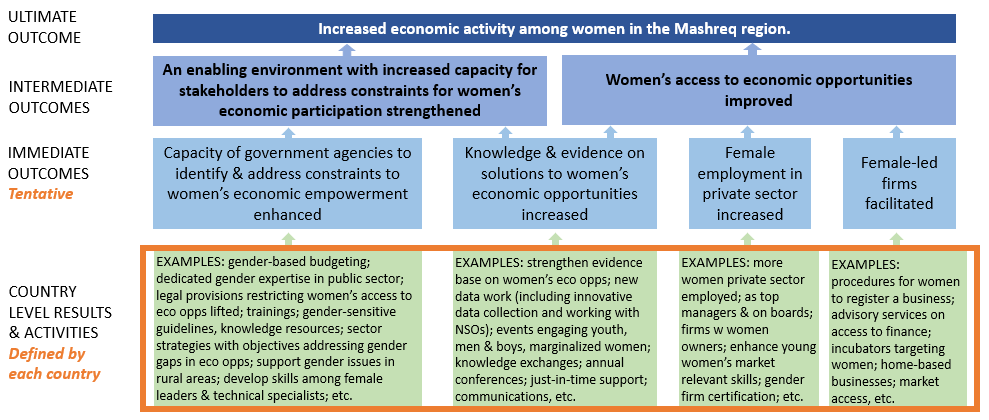
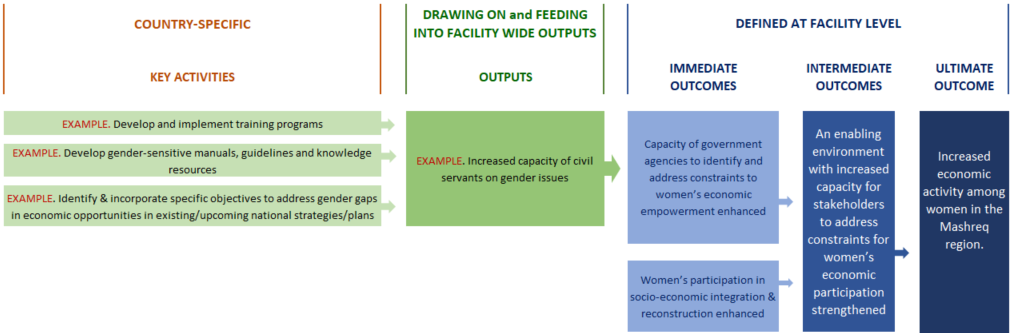


Figure 3. **Section of country level WEEAP template for identification of activities and outputs**



1. ***Dialogue & Participation***

This pillar will provide the foundation for a coordinated approach to the multi-sector, multi-stakeholder identification of priorities and complementarities on the gender agenda in each country, and at the regional level. It will strengthen institutional coordination mechanisms and government clients’ capacity to effectively address their priorities for women’s empowerment in the realm of economic activity, focusing on key levers for transformational change identified in country action plans. Activities may include:

* **Committing to gender priorities**. The Facility will support government-led country level roundtables & the development of country-level action plans which will identify priorities and coordination mechanisms. Multi-sectoral and participatory processes with be supported, bringing Ministries of Finance together with other government stakeholders, academia, private sector and civil society on gender. The Facility may provide government counterpart with cost-sharing resources to ensure buy-in and to strengthen institutional arrangements for coordination.[[8]](#footnote-8)
* **Engaging and strengthening local expertise and participation**. Activities will tap into local Arab, WBG and development partner expertise in identified areas. Use social media & innovative methods to specifically engage young women and men, and for real-time sharing of results across countries and stakeholders.

1. ***Data & Knowledge***

The overall objective of this pillar is to build a strong body of evidence overtime by focusing on filling knowledge and data gaps related to key levers and systemic challenges to identified constraints to women’s economic activity and full participation in societies. The data collected and knowledge materials produced, will be of direct policy relevance and/or practical applicability (for projects, private sector, civil society, etc.). This pillar could, for example, include:

* **Generating new gender data and indicators**. Sex-disaggregated data and statistics on issues of relevance to women is a public good with direct policy and programmatic application. The Facility will leverage ongoing engagements with National Statistical Offices to provide technical and financial resources for collecting, processing, analyzing and disseminating new statistical information on areas such as intra-household bargaining power, norms, time-use. Other potential activities may be around partnering and experimenting around high frequency data collection, and strengthening knowledge and use of statistical data to monitor relevant SDGs and national gender specific indicators, support tracking mechanisms. Could also include, for example, implementation of Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (production, resources, income, leadership, time) and innovative data collection pilots (modules, perception or opinion surveys, etc.).
* **Producing rigorous analytical work**. The Facility will provide resources to analytical work that responds to needs identified in the country-level Action Plans, promoting mixed methods approaches.
* **Disseminating innovative and targeted knowledge products**. Create a combination of knowledge products fit for different audiences with focus on evidence, results, and lessons learned. Work with the regional team to identify, produce and share the knowledge generated across segments in the country.
* **Making training & capacity building widely available**. To reinforce governmental and non-governmental institutions’ capacity to address challenges for women’s economic inclusion, activities to increase awareness, knowledge and skills among stakeholders will be designed and implemented for each country context. Examples include: interactive clinics, exchanges around good practices (including from private sector); increase private sector awareness on benefits for hiring, training, retaining, promoting women and for lending to women entrepreneurs. Activities will be designed to be relevant to institutional and individual professional needs and open to a wide range of stakeholders; and will use technologies and existing online trainings. Some of these trainings will take a regional shape.

1. ***Innovating for Results***

This pillar will facilitate adaptive learning across stakeholders, by supporting results-focused innovations aimed at speeding up progress towards priority areas by testing new ideas, piloting and evaluating new approaches to address binding constraints. Behavioral interventions and the use of new technologies will be in focus. Potential activities include:

* **Learning from piloting and evaluating**. Support innovative, including behavioral change focused, interventions aimed at speeding up progress towards priority areas, with built in assessments/ evaluations to produce and make ground-breaking evidence available to inform policies and programs. Evaluations may include different types of impact assessments and nimble assessments. Partnerships will be forged to strengthen local capacity, and crowdsourcing methods will be used for innovative, bottom-up development solutions that engage with youth and marginalized women. The Facility may fund government, national partners and private sector proposals to test creative, new ideas for scale, to use nimble evaluations or to harness disruptive technologies in collaboration and with technical support from the Bank.
* **Scaling up for transformational change**. The Facility will provide targeted, technical assistance to identify and expand successful efforts and promising approaches that enable women’s economic participation. The Facility will work with government clients and private sector to identify relevant country-specific policies, programs and initiatives in which there may be an opportunity to contribute to improved results for women’s economic activity. For these initiatives, the Facility will provide expertise based on international and regional evidence, lessons learned and promising approaches, and work with the clients to identify concrete reforms and tweaking. As part of its sustainability arm, the Facility will also mobilize other source of funds and facilitate financial scale up of successful initiatives it has piloted. Examples could be related to active labor market policies, partnering with the private sector to pilot digital market place and setting up block chain, and others.
* **Firm certification**. Consider setting up and launching a “Gender Seal” program, by which firms get certified if implementing a series of criteria that make the workplace more women-friendly. E.g. localizing the EDGE certification.

1. **Regional Work Program**

While the focus of the Facility is to support country-level priorities, there are some activities that are of regional interest and that would benefit from economy of scale. The regional program will support cross-country activities such as regional conferences, data/survey work, regional knowledge platforms, among others detailed further below. In addition, there are some issues that are of regional concern, such as those related to refugees and IDPs, that require special attention at the regional level. Therefore, the regional program will support innovative solutions to enhancing Syrian refugee women’s resilience, with a focus on their economic empowerment and opportunities.

1. ***Dialogue & Participation***

This pillar will support overall coordination and a series of activities aimed at ensuring a coordinated approach to the multi-sector, multi-stakeholder solutions to women’s increased economic opportunities. It will fund the Secretariat in the WBG Beirut office, with main coordination, fiduciary, continuous partnership building, fund-raising and reporting related responsibilities, led by a Senior Gender Specialist; and the support to country implementation through supervision and country level focal points, and the following key activities:

* **Enhancing visibility and attention to gender across the Mashreq.** The Facility will finance annual or biannual conferences with the objective to bring attention to relevant issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment, bringing in technical expertise and important regional influencers, with a focus on results. The first Conference will take place in Beirut, Lebanon on January 19, 2019, and will serve to identify and communicate initial government commitments and donor support, and to launch the Facility.
* **Holding everybody accountable**. Develop a Community of Practice, a collaborative platform or network for knowledge and information sharing, and joint monitoring of progress among stakeholders for increased knowledge-sharing and accountability around agreed upon activities and targets. Specific networks, such as among women entrepreneurs, may be supported or developed to further the objectives of the Facility.

1. ***Data & Knowledge***

For the data and analytical work, please note that areas of regional interest, where working at the regional level to benefit from the economy of scale may be relevant, will be further detailed based on country level priorities.

* Technical assistance and advisory services for **capacity building** that spans across countries (areas depending on priorities identified in the country-level action plans, could be on e.g. leadership, gender responsive budgeting, and activities could include South-South exchange; training trips, off-site training, etc.).
* **Media for engagement and Disruptive Technologies (DTs).** Set up a website and social media strategy to engage in a wide conversation and keep issues on the agenda (partner with youth networks, universities and other); use DTs for increased social accountability of commitments made -engage youth, CSO, private sector, to monitor progress in real time. As an initial activity to shape this work, the Facility will conduct an in-depth Assessment of Disruptive Technologies: what technologies are used by women, what venues exist, untapped potentials, recommendations for most effective platforms to use and/or develop.
* **Regional analytical work.** Produce a State of the Mashreq Women report on an annual basis. Other potential themes: analyze social media -Facebook, twitter-, on social norms, roles, aspirations, expectations; Role of DTs to support women’s economic opportunities (nexus digital economy and women’s labor force participation); nexus climate change-rural areas-gender. Sector-specific operationally relevant work (e.g. women in transport/mobility; addressing gender in infrastructure projects; business case for women-friendly policies in private sector; care economy). Technologies will be used for enhanced learning and quality control processes, such as opening the peer review process by bringing in regional, cross-country expertise, and external stakeholders (including local level).
* **Knowledge curation and sharing**. The Facility will work closely with the governments to support making country-level and regional content developed under all pillars available in a systematic, streamlined manner, using a variety of media and technological platforms to share and engage stakeholders around evidence, stories, policy notes, good practices in a user-friendly manner. Activities could include, for example, competition for university students to use certain data to produce story/blog/vlog.

1. ***Innovating for Results***

Under this pillar the following activities will be explored, and further detailed based on country level priorities:

* **Behavioral interventions**. Identify, pilot and assess behavioral interventions, with focus on entry points in existing projects, and on themes across the three countries to enhance learning. Themes would depend on country-level action plans, but could include e.g. family friendly policies, aspirations of women, masculinities, private sector policies that incentivize female participation and promotion, innovative solutions to development challenges specific to the current context of FCV (effects and interventions on refugees and host communities), and coping strategies used by men, women, boys and girls in FCV settings (food security, access to markets and services, legal framework, etc.).
* **Road-testing innovative approaches**. Provide TA to Governments at the country-level based on a simple rolling window to fund piloting of innovative approaches that aim to increase women’s access to economic opportunities. Explore the possibility of setting up a small-grants mechanism that will allow for investing in small-scale solutions to challenges faced by female entrepreneurs and women’s economic opportunities in general by testing creative, new ideas and encourage young people to participate applying DTs. Partner with regionally recognized technical experts for country-level work, in collaboration with local universities.
* **Internal**: Just-in-Time support. Provide TA to WBG project teams. Set up rolling window, focusing on specific TA based on innovation, results and public good rationale; build on large scale existing and pipeline WBG projects as entry points for moving the needle on specific needs and priorities of women in the Mashreq, ensuring that all WBG interventions in the region identify and address relevant gender gaps.

1. **Implementation Arrangements**

Initially, the Facility will channel its funds through the broader coordination and financing architecture set out in the World Bank Group Multi Donor Trust Fund, the **Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality** (UFGE). For gender related funding channeled through the WBG, the UFGE provides a common platform for coordination and dialogue and ensures coherence across various financing flows and financing vehicles. This will include enhanced information-sharing and synergies across the World Bank and donors.

To start with, **activities under the Facility will be implemented as Bank executed,** where the Bank manages the implementation the activities. **All activities will be based on the Steering Committee- reviewed country level and regional annual work plans** (see Section 6). Thus, the Bank will support the implementation of each country’s annual work plan through its advisory and analytical work, providing the administrative and technical support that the countries require to achieve their objectives. The Facility can finance, for example, consultants providing analytical and advisory work to the government; UN organizations providing capacity building activities; universities or think tanks producing specific analytical work; firms testing certain approaches to e.g. service delivery, etc. The Bank will be the hiring entity, and selection and hiring processes will follow WBG policies and procedures. Country governments will be expected to be actively involved in the analytical work done as part of the Bank-executed activities and will be providing inputs on the Terms of Reference and housing the consultants within the relevant agencies and ministries. This active participation will strengthen counterpart capacity and prepare them for taking on future recipient executed activities.

**Once the Facility has raised most of the target amount of US$ 20M, recipient executed activities (i.e. transfer of funds as a grant to the government), may be financed from the Facility**.[[9]](#footnote-9) The UFGE, through which the funds will flow to the Facility, allows for Recipient-executed activities. A grant to finance a recipient-executed activity would go through the same project cycle as any Bank financed operation and would provide the opportunity to further strengthen counterpart capacity and ownership of the agenda.

1. **Governance**

From the WBG side, the Facility is to be administered by a **Secretariat** housed in the WB Beirut office, with the main coordination, knowledge management, continuous fund-raising and reporting related responsibilities. The Secretariat will be responsible for the alignment of activities with the WBG and government priorities, communications and risk management, as well as ensuring complementarity with broader gender initiatives available in the region, including the forthcoming MNA Gender Innovations Lab (GIL; focused on Impact Evaluations), Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi; with a regional eCommerce initiative that includes Jordan and Lebanon), and the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE; with regional allocations to promote awareness, knowledge, and capacity for gender-informed policy-making). The Secretariat will be led by a Senior Gender Specialist based in WB Beirut office, leveraging existing WBG staff, through the appointment of focal points in each WB country office to manage the day-to-day supervision of program activities in each respective country.

From the Government side, each country should appoint a **National Coordinator** responsible and fully empowered to manage coordination of the country-level work under the government responsibility, such as the development of annual work plans, supervision of country-level action plans implementation and specific activities carried out in the framework of the Facility, monitoring and reporting, as well as communication aspects. It is expected that the government would provide certain support functions required for the National Coordinator to effectively carry out her functions and to provide the required office space and logistical arrangements. In addition, relevant government agencies (to be defined in the action plans) should identify liaisons (building on existing structures, such as existing gender focal points).

In addition, two advisory groups will be formed to guide the work of the Facility:

* **Steering Committee**. This high-level advisory group will be responsible for providing overall strategic direction and guidance for the MGF implementation and outreach. Specific functions include to: discuss the country-level action plans; support the identification and invitation of experts for the Technical Advisory Roster; review country level annual work plans and budgets, as well as advise on the focus areas and priorities set out; review progress reports; and, support fund-raising activities. Core members of the Steering Committee (SC) will include two government representatives per country, the Regional Directors of the World Bank, the IFC, the government of Canada and the government of Norway. In addition, development partners and private sector donors who demonstrate strong commitment and a record of supporting women’s economic opportunities in the Mashreq region will be invited to join the Steering Committee. The SC will be co-chaired by the World Bank Regional Director and one of the Governments benefiting from the Facility, on a rolling, annual basis. Meetings will be held twice a year, and any decisions will be taken by consensus. Meetings can be held virtually.
* **Technical Advisory Expert Roster**. A roster of experts will be identified to be called upon for specific, targeted inputs and intellectual leadership for the Facility. Functions include to review and provide technical inputs for major terms of reference and calls for proposals; to peer review analytical work; and to participate in technical discussions and dissemination events related to the findings. Experts will include prominent and aspiring academics from universities and think tanks, predominantly from the region, but may also include international ones such as Brookings and United States Institute for Peace.

1. **Risks**

The main overall risk is related to sustainability due to the nature of the political economy of the region. This leads to the following potential risks:

* **Lack of clear counterparts and/or of buy-in from government and stakeholder fatigue related to donor-driven fora**. To mitigate this risk, the Facility will focus on supporting existing priorities and instruments, rather than creating parallel structures or new priorities; countries cross learning visits; continuous dialogue; funding for implementation.
* **Low level of legitimacy and functionality of some state entities.** To mitigate this risk, the Facility will bring in other key stakeholders, such as NGOs, academia, local government bodies, and harness technologies to facilitate a bottom-up approach and wide participation.
* **Limited capacity for implementation of country level action plans.** This risk will be mitigated by having a strong focus on adaptive learning, with ongoing and innovative training and capacity building activities, and by creating an enabling environment for testing new approaches in which learning from what does not work will also be considered as important for improving implementation.

An added risk is that the scope of the Facility depends completely on funding available to prepare and implement it.

There are also country-specific risks related to issues such as fragility and conflict; fiscal sustainability; political stability; perceptions related to corruption; and other. These risks will be analyzed in detail based on the country level action plans, and mitigation measures will be identified.

1. **Results**

The Results Framework of the Facility will be informed by the WBG’s commitments on gender as defined in the MNA Regional Gender Action Plan as well as the country level priorities as set forth by each government and collectively as the Mashreq region. It is suggested that the success of the Facility will depend on outcomes and results in two key areas:

* **Tier 1. Creating an enabling environment for relevant stakeholders to effectively identify and address gender constraints to women’s full participation in society** (process-oriented, institutional level, indicators). The Facility will be held accountable for its ability to fundraise, coordinate knowledge sharing and client engagement, deliver on the conference and action plans, and to ensure that innovations are being supported and studied. This level will also include the WBG’s internal commitment for 100% gender tagging all World Bank funded Mashreq projects starting FY19 and retrofitting existing non-tagged projects through a comprehensive analysis of what can be done differently on gender to benefit and engage women. The specific indicators, targets and responsibility for monitoring and reporting will be specified by the Steering Committee. Some initial proposed indicators include:
  + Country level action plans developed and endorsed by authorities (*target: 3*)
  + Funds raised to support the Facility (*target: US$20M by 2020*)
  + Extensive participation & social media engagement (*specific indicators and targets based on communication strategy to be developed*)
  + Share of new WBG projects with Project Development Objective (PDO) OR stand-alone component that aims to narrow a specific gender gap (“*Gender-Tag” baseline Mashreq 74%; target 100%*)[[10]](#footnote-10)
* **Tier 2. Improving all women’s access to economic opportunities in the Mashreq** (development outcomes). These are indicators towards which the Facility will contribute, and for which progress towards achieving agreed upon targets will be monitored specifically around women’s economic empowerment and gender and conflict. The specific indicators, targets and responsibility for monitoring and reporting will be specified in the Country-level Action Plans and should be discussed by the Steering Committee. The intention is that the Facility will contribute towards improving indicators such as:
  + Female unemployment (*currently 21.6% of female labor force, age 15+*)
  + Female labor participation rate (*currently 19.6% of female population, age 15+; modeled ILO estimate*)
  + Share of women with account at a financial institution (*currently 9% of women age 15+*)
  + Share of female beneficiaries provided access to basic services in communities hosting refugees (*currently 42% of all WBG project beneficiaries*)
  + Share of female beneficiaries provided access to economic opportunities in communities hosting refugees (*currently 22% of all WBG project beneficiaries*)

The data collection activities will support the development of a baseline and capacity development activities will include to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capabilities. An independent formative midterm evaluation of the Facility will be carried out to inform the activities, implementation arrangements and funding requirements going forward, with a view to ensure optimal efficiency and impact.

Figure 2 above presents the overall, initial theory of change.

1. See for example World Bank. 2012. *Gender Equality and Development. 2012 World Development Report*. Washington, DC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Bank. 2017. *Progress Towards Gender Equality in the Middle East and North Africa Region*. Washington, DC. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. McKinsey Global Institute. 2015. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality Can Add $12 Trillion to Global Growth*. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Note that the Mashreq countries refers to Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon for the effects of this Concept Note. Data is latest available from the World Development Indicators, unless another source is stated. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. CARE. 2017. “Factsheet: Care Jordan -- Syrian refugee, other minority refugee, and Jordanian host households.”; UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP. 2017. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. UNICEF. 2014. *A Study on Early Marriage in Jordan 2014*. Amman. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. UN Women. 2015. “Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace”. Global Study on the Implementation of Rise of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Facility recognizes that all countries have gender action plans and commitments to varying degrees, but that implementation and monitoring is challenging. The idea for the action plans is to support the countries in identifying priorities for women’s economic empowerment (building on existing plans), to enhance focus and chances for success, and to gain in effectiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The reason for requiring the full US$ 20M before entering in recipient executed activities is due to the value for money analysis, as the cost for setting up (fiduciary assessments, safeguards assessments, developing procurement framework etc.) and monitoring a project financed by a grant is high. In addition, grants can only be made based on the actual funds in the Bank’s account. Finally, a project cycle can take up to a year from concept stage to effectiveness, meaning that the Facility will need to have secured funding for at least three years ahead. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Baseline represents average share of gender tagged projects in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon approved in Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)