

**Terms of Reference:
Position Paper on
Female Participation in the Labor Market
Under the USAID-funded WISE Subcontract with ENCC**

The Egyptian National Competitiveness Council (ENCC) and USAID's Workforce Improvement and Skill Enhancement (WISE) project issued a new study entitled, "Labor Skills, Productivity, and Human Resources Management," which was prepared in cooperation with the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (BASEERA). The study aimed at evaluating the efficiency of the Egyptian labor market and the ability of related institutions to formulate and implement policies to achieve the objectives of economic growth, competitiveness, and development-planning in an equitable manner by matching labor market needs with the technical skills of Egyptian labor in sectors capable of supporting the Egyptian economy.

The study includes an analysis of labor market imbalances in Egypt, low productivity, and human resource management. The study presents bottlenecks experienced by private sector companies in targeted governorates and economic areas. The objective was to identify the most important procedures and regulatory frameworks related to the labor market that require intervention in order to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the Egyptian labor market and define the professional competencies that meet the needs of the business sector.

The issues of youth employment, female participation in the labor market, the quality of technical education, vocational training, and informality were at the top of the challenges identified by the study. To tackle these challenges, the study produced a rich set of conclusions and recommendations on developing and empowering Egyptian workers. In addition, the results showed the importance of factors related to the business climate and governing policies to raising the efficiency of the Egyptian labor market.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the work on the recommendations of the study, the Enabling Environment Advisory Group (EEAG) was established to exchange the wide range of experiences with all related parties and identify the necessary priorities to move forward with the required reforms in order to provide an enabling environment for improving the efficiency of the labor market. The EEAG has chosen the topic of the **Female Participation in the Labor Market** as one of the reform priorities.

Female Participation in the Labor Market:

While females in Egypt suffer from the same outcomes of labor market inefficiency that affect men (e.g., the high unemployment rate despite educational attainment, a lack of security when working in the informal sector, etc.), they are also subjected to an environment that is not conducive to female participation, particularly working conditions in the informal sector.

Female participation in the labor force is important, as evidence shows that higher rates of female participation lead to faster economic growth (UN Women, 2015). GDP growth is directly related to gender equality. However, the association between educational attainment and participation is weakening in Egypt, and educated women are increasingly likely to remain outside the labor force.

The study has identified the following challenges leading to low levels of **Female Participation in the Labor Market**:

- It is commonly believed by society that females will take men's jobs in the labor market and that married females should work in the household for the sake of the family's well-being.
- The Labor Law guarantees gender equality, but it is not widely enforced. In addition, some employers feel that benefits for females included in the Labor Law, such as maternity leave, daily nursing breaks, and childbearing leave, negatively affect company productivity, so they tend to avoid hiring females unless they can pay them lower salaries than males.
- Once married, many females devote their time to their family and the household, making entry/reentry in the formal labor market difficult.
- In order to meet family commitments, many married women seek jobs with flexible hours or a shortened workday. The public sector, a large employer in Egypt, formerly offered such positions, which were attractive to married females.
- Females are more likely to leave work once married, creating challenges for private sector employment.
- Females are reluctant to take jobs that might require night shifts or in sectors that do not offer job security.
- Due to many of the above reasons, an increasing number of females have gravitated to low-productivity activities with hourly or daily wages, due the low skill requirements and ease of finding such employment through connections.
- The provision of incentives for industries to locate to new "industrial" cities failed to get workers to move their residence to these new cities and led to a substantial increase in commuting distances between 1998 and 2006. Women were unable to increase their commuting time to the same extent as men, and thus, could not access the new employment opportunities. In addition, public transportation is perceived as unsafe for females and unreliable. Cairo's "women-only" Metro cars are a good example of measures that have supported female participation in the labor market. Extending this model to other forms of transport, such as private buses and minibuses, as well as encouraging/incentivizing employers to provide appropriate transportation for their workers could increase female participation in the new industrial zones.

Scope of Work:

The required position paper will tackle the issue of **Female Participation in the Labor Market** based on the following recommendations from the "Labor Skills, Productivity and Human Resources Management" study:

1. Incentivizing private sector employers to offer women flexible hours, childcare, and safe and affordable transportation to ease their commute.

2. Providing females with support in searching for jobs that match their skills.
3. Raising awareness of the importance of female education, recognizing that the female dropout rate is higher, as is female participation in informal sector.
4. Creating understanding and awareness of the law ensuring gender equality in the workplace, including law enforcement.
5. Promoting labor market reforms targeting females and provide them with incentives and training to promote entrepreneurship activities, thus improving their participation rate in the labor market.
6. Addressing lodging and commuting concerns for females.
7. Addressing the shortage of nurseries and other biases

In tackling these recommendations, the consultant will:

- Provide a baseline review of the progress achieved in the field of female participation in the labor market.¹
- Examine how to address obstacles to hiring women by the private sector.
- The analysis will be in terms of literature review of the best practices in countries with similar cultural and economic background.
- Include a road map of activities for implementing the abovementioned recommendations in consultations with stakeholders' representatives
- Categorize recommendations according to timeframe required for their implementation.
- Paper Length and Formatting: 25 pages; Times New Roman, 12p font with 1 single space and 1 margin on all sides.

Tasks and Deliverables Time-Table

- The consultant will work under the supervision of the Senior Advisor of the Enabling Environment Unit (EEU) and the director of the Unit.
- S/he will conduct meetings with relevant stakeholders.
- S/he will incorporate necessary changes as per consultations with EEU senior advisor and director.
- The first draft of the Position Paper will be delivered within a month from the recruitment date of the consultant.
- S/he will prepare a presentation of the Position Paper to be delivered to the Enabling Environment Advisory Group (EEAG).
- S/he will incorporate feedback from EEAG members into the final version of the Position Paper.
- The final Position Paper will be delivered within three weeks from receipt of EEAG's feedback.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Egyptian citizenship required.
- Minimum of a Master's Degree in economics, gender studies, social sciences, or a related field.

¹ Based on the information derived from the "Labor Skills, Productivity and Human Resources Management" study, the Consultant will provide an update on progress achieved in the field of Female Participation in the Labor Market since the Labor Study was issued in March 2017. ENCC will furnish the Consultant with an update on progress achieved in the field through February 2017.

- Minimum of 15 years' experience in the field, including prior experience in the Egyptian context and a strong familiarity with international best labor market practices and global trends.
- Knowledge of regulatory issues for private sector development in Egypt.
- Strong analytical and organizational skills.
- Ability to work in a team environment is vital.
- Proficiency with Excel and other MS Office software packages.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills in both Arabic and English.