Context

In 2015, United Nations member States agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To achieve SDGs, States also agreed on the global framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) that aligns all domestic and international resource flows, policies and international agreements with economic, social and environmental priorities. In the AAAA, member States called for integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs)\(^1\) to help them strengthen planning processes and overcome existing impediments to financing sustainable development.

Successful small and medium business contribute to the building of the competitive state and to achievement of a number of sustainable development goals (i.e. SDG 8: Economic growth and decent work, SDG 10: Reduced inequality, SDG 5: Gender equality and SDG 1: No poverty). Therefore, inclusive SME financing when individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs is important element for INFF.

The formulation of an SDG-aligned SME financing strategy for Kazakhstan will be a driving contributor to a comprehensive financing strategy for the country’s development process. Such strategy will suggest policy recommendations on enhancing and expanding financial inclusion of SME that are smaller, from less developed regions, in sectors particularly affected by COVID-19, and disproportionately led by or employing women and girls.

\(^1\) Integrated National Financial Framework, URL: https://inff.org
Economic Research Institute, JSC under the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (ERI), within the framework of the Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have conducted desk and field research on the current state of SMEs financing in Kazakhstan. As a result of the work, actual examples of restrictions on access to financial resources for SMEs were identified and proposals to increase the availability of financing for the SME sector were developed. Furthermore, the study strives to explore how to systematically embed MSME financial inclusion within the frame of INFF in Kazakhstan.

Perspectives of inclusive finance will be the main topic of the national seminar: «Improving access to finance for small and medium enterprises of Kazakhstan within the framework of INFF». During the national workshop key results and findings of field research and expert consultations will be presented to a larger audience and stakeholders. The methodology and conceptual approaches have been discussed and validated during the Expert group meeting (EGM) conducted in August 23, this year.

The participants of national seminar will discuss:

- Current state of SME development and its support system in Kazakhstan;
- Availability of financial resources for SMEs in strategic government planning documents;
- Results of desk and field research on the availability of financial resources for SMEs;
- INFF capabilities and project implementation status for its implementation in Kazakhstan;
- Proposals and perspectives for improving access to financial resources for SMEs in Kazakhstan, taking account the principles of gender equality to achieve SDGs.

Objectives and expected outcomes:
Discuss with key stakeholders in government, business, international, scientific, consulting and public organizations the main needs and gaps in providing access to financial services for SMEs;

Develop and verify proposals to improve the availability of financial resources for SMEs in Kazakhstan, taking account gender and territorial specifics;

Contribute to the improvement of interaction between stakeholders on the implementation of INFF in Kazakhstan in general and the INFF element for SMEs in particular;

**Participants**

- The expert group meeting will gather representatives from relevant government agencies, business development institutions, banks and microfinance organizations, and key experts from academia, private sector, think tanks and international organizations contributing to the promotion and financing SME sector in Kazakhstan.
- Participation will be by invitation only.

**Further information**

The national seminar will take place in person modality on 23 November 2022 from 14:00 to 17:00 (with an option of participation through ZOOM for separate participants, by reference [https://zoom.us/j/94993004395?pwd=cjFnL0FoVWN0ZDNReGtIYlhns2dNQT09#success](https://zoom.us/j/94993004395?pwd=cjFnL0FoVWN0ZDNReGtIYlhns2dNQT09#success)). The meeting will be conducted in Russian and English. Detailed information can be found on the official event page [https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/kazakhstan-national-seminar-improving-access-finance-small-and-medium-enterprises](https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/kazakhstan-national-seminar-improving-access-finance-small-and-medium-enterprises). All questions regarding the seminar can be directed to n.khaidarova@economy.kz, a.alimbetov@economy.kz, dinara.ablkasym@gmail.com with copy to agapi.harutyunyan@un.org.
### PROGRAMME

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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| 14:00 – 14:15 | **Opening**  
**Welcome remarks:**  
Sukhrob Khojimatov, Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Kazakhstan (tbc)  
Alberto Isgut. Economic Affairs Officer, FFDS-MPFD-ESCAP (online)  
Ruslan Sultanov, Chairman of the Board of the Economic Research Institute under the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan |
| 14:15 - 15:40 | **Main directions towards improving SME financial inclusion within wider INFF concept in Kazakhstan (national policy framework)**  
The session aims to explore how to systematically embed SME financial inclusion within the frame of an emerging INFF in Kazakhstan. What are the ways on strengthening the policy framework on SME development that are available in Kazakhstan and what can be improved policy-wise to address the challenges that have been revealed during the field research and expert consultations?  
Moderator: Erik Dzhambulov, Director of Entrepreneurship Development Policy Department, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan |
| 14:15 – 14:50 | **Part 1. National policy framework and priorities for SME financing**  
(each speaker - 7-10 min)  
Rashid Dzhurabekov, Deputy Director of the Department for State Support and Protection of Entrepreneurship, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
“SME government support measures”  
Zhanar Mahanova, Director of the Department of Financial Instruments and Microfinancing, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
“The current state of support for rural entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and the necessary incentives for increasing the financial inclusion of rural SMEs”  
Representative of the Agency for Regulation and Development of Financial Market (online)  
On the role of banking sector in SME development in Kazakhstan and vision to implement the priorities of the National Plan until 2025 to increase the role of the banking sector in financing the economy |
| 14:50 -15:40 | **Part 2. SME financial inclusion within INFF; key issues and challenges to sustainable financing** (each speaker - 7-10 min)  
Bakhytsgul Khambar, Director of SDG Secretariat, Economic Research Institute, 10 min  
«On implementation of INFF of Kazakhstan, the main challenges and opportunities»  
Nurgul Khaidarova, acting Director of the Center for Competitive Environment Research, Economic Research Institute, 10 min  
«SME Financial Inclusion in Kazakhstan: key findings and recommendations of the study»  
Maria Dotsenko, UN Women Representative to Kazakhstan, 10 min  
«On Gender perspectives within INFF»  
Nazira Djakipbayeva, Head of Women Entrepreneurship Centers, Atameken Chamber of Commerce  
Availability of financial resources for women and rural residents from a business standpoint  
**Open Discussion** (each 5 min)  
**Moderator:** Ms Agapi Harutyunyan, Senior Economic Adviser, ESCAP  
Yerbol Abdugaliev, Deputy Chairman of the Board, Bank RBK, JSC  
SME Financing: experience, challenges, plans and development  
Aliya Agybayeva, Managing Director on State Programs, “Damu” Entrepreneurship Development Fund”, JSC  
Zarina Adilkhanova, Senior Researcher, Economic Modeling Development Center, NAC Analytica  
Murat Iskakov, Director of Strategic and Corporate Development, Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture, JSC  
Yerbol Omarhanov, Director of Association of Microfinance Organizations of Kazakhstan, LEU  
Bekzhan Otarbayev, Director for GR Association of Financiers of Kazakhstan, LEU  
Representatives of Invited International organizations  
Genadiy Rau, Senior Economics Officer ADB Kazakhstan  
Jambal Ganbaatar, Senior financial sector specialist World Bank (online)  
Erik Livny, Regional Lead Economist, Central Asia, EBRD (online)  
Representatives of professional associations, business, analytical and academic organizations (optional). |
| 15:45 – 17:00 |  
**Open Discussion** (each 5 min)  
**Moderator:** Ms Agapi Harutyunyan, Senior Economic Adviser, ESCAP  
Yerbol Abdugaliev, Deputy Chairman of the Board, Bank RBK, JSC  
SME Financing: experience, challenges, plans and development  
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| 17:10 – 17:30 | Resuming the discussion by moderator, coffee/tea, informal communication |