Gender Sensitive Value Chains
From Pilot Projects to a Sustainable & Inclusive Regional Growth Strategy
A Regional Exchange and Networking Conference, 9th December 2014, Tunis (Tunisia)

CONFERENCE REPORT
Introduction

Dear Reader,

On 9th December 2014, the Regional Program "Economic Integration of Women in the MENA Region" (EconoWin) held a Conference on "Gender Sensitive Value Chains (GSVC) - From Pilot Projects to a Sustainable & Inclusive Growth Strategy" in Tunis, Tunisia.

Around one hundred participants from government and non-government organisations in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, international organisations, private companies and research institutions came together to share information and to work together.

The idea behind the conference was multifold. On the one hand to see how the economic importance of women’s work in value chains should become more tangible. Women’s contribution to competition and to economic growth and development was evident with booths that showcased women as successful players in value chains.

On the other hand the topical question was how governments, businesses and civil society organisations can use the GSVC Approach as a driver for inclusive growth. The main response to this as highlighted by the conference is to integrate the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Approach into national and regional development strategies involving all actors and letting them draft and carry out their own solutions. To find out more on how to do this, helpful strategies and the approaches taken by international organisations like ILO, GIZ EconoWin or Agri-Pro-Focus together with national statements from the region were presented and discussed.

The EconoWin Team is pleased to present to you the conference report. More information on the background and steps of the GSVC Approach as well as an overview of GSVC projects can be found in the brochure attached to this report.

We hope both publications will motivate and inspire you in your work.

Nele Wasmuth
Program Coordinator
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The Regional Program “Economic Integration of Women in the MENA Region” (EconoWin) is commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.
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<td>ADS</td>
<td>Agence de Développement Social, Morocco</td>
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<td>AMAPPE</td>
<td>Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise</td>
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<td>APEZ</td>
<td>Association de la Promotion de l'Eglantier à Zaghouan</td>
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<td>APIA</td>
<td>Agricultural Investment Promotion Agency, Tunisia</td>
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<td>ATLAS</td>
<td>Association Tunisienne pour le Leadership, l'Auto-développement et la Solidarité</td>
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<td>BMZ</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany</td>
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<td>CRDA</td>
<td>Regional Commissariat for Agricultural Development, Tunisia</td>
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<td>EconoWin</td>
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<td>GSVC</td>
<td>Gender Sensitive Value Chain</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organisation</td>
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<td>IRADA</td>
<td>Productivity Enhancement Center in Jordan</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
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<td>ONA</td>
<td>National Handicrafts Office, Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>REEWP</td>
<td>Regional Economic Empowerment of Women Project</td>
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<td>RSS</td>
<td>Royal Scientific Society, Jordan</td>
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<td>SFD</td>
<td>Social Fund for Development, Egypt</td>
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<td>VC</td>
<td>Value Chain</td>
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MENA Regional Conference on Gender Sensitive Value Chains

Setting the stage for action

Nele Wasmuth, EconoWin Program Coordinator, opened the conference and welcomed the conference attendees. With the core message "When women work, economies win" she introduced EconoWin, a regional program active in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco.

"The aim of EconoWin", explained Nele Wasmuth, "is to support the economic integration of women in the MENA region". In the Middle East and North Africa, the rate of women's participation in the economy is the lowest in the world. Nevertheless, many examples and empiric evidence prove that when women work and participate in professional life, the economy of a country grows; its society becomes more equitable.

One area of cooperation in EconoWin is to empower women to work in the higher echelons of value chains. From 2012 to 2014 EconoWin supported gender sensitive value chain projects in selected agricultural and textile industries.

The Conference on Gender Sensitive Value Chains provided a forum for the participants to attend as experts in the field, to think together, to consult each other and to develop ideas on future prospects. Nele Wasmuth highlighted the importance of discussing the subject from different viewpoints. She insisted that it would be more appropriate to call the event a 'think tank' and not a conference given the variety of people in attendance and the different ideas they had brought with them.

Monia Gastli, EconoWin representative in Tunisia and conference host, also welcomed the audience and stressed the regional element of EconoWin cooperating in four countries of the MENA region. She shared her pleasure in gathering together in Tunisia all the different stakeholders from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia as well as from Europe and Middle Eastern countries further afield.
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Natasha Walker, the conference facilitator, summarized the two main objectives of the event, namely to discuss the achievements and challenges of GSVC approaches from different organizations and countries, as well as to develop new ideas on how to integrate the GSVC approach in an inclusive regional growth strategy. She stressed the conference’s role to set a stage for concrete action on the participants’ own work with Gender Sensitive Value Chains.

Around twenty participants came from each of the four countries where EconoWin is active as well as twenty attendees from other Middle Eastern and European countries. Most of the attendees represented NGOs and governments alongside some from international organisations and a few scientific institutions and private companies.

The question “How confident are you that the GSVC approach can achieve growth?” was answered by the majority of the audience with "very confident" and "confident". Regarding the question “Who’s responsible for ensuring the success of GSVC projects?” some of the participants voted for governments, while others presented the opinion that NGOs could guarantee the success of GSVC projects. Nearly all attendees agreed that "women themselves" play a very important role in the success of a GSVC project.

Natasha Walker highlighted the great value of all players’ collaboration and the opportunity during the conference to reflect together on "how we do it, if we are already doing it, and how we can do it better".
The conference was structured into five sessions that are presented in the following chapters:

1. Two key note speeches by ILO and GIZ – “Making women’s work in value chains more visible” and “Making gender sensitive value chains work in MENA”

2. A panel discussion with Jordanian governmental representatives – “Using the GSVC Approach to ignite Inclusive Growth”

3. A market place of GSVC projects with NGO and companies’ representatives: “Getting to know some Gender Sensitive Value Chain Projects”

4. “Becoming active in the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Think Tank”; three parallel working groups on:
   - Government strategies on GSVC and Inclusive Growth
   - Challenges and Success Factors of GSVC Initiatives
   - Integrating Value Chains in Global Markets

5. Open panel discussion: “Prospects of Future Actions for Inclusive Growth with Gender Sensitive Value Chains”
Making women's work in value chains more visible

Merten Sievers, Value Chain Development Global Coordinator at the International Labor Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, provided a technical overview of value chain development and employment. He explained how value chains gain in competitiveness when the work of women in the chain is upgraded, valued and visible.

According to Merten Sievers, good jobs for development are those that improve the living standards and decrease poverty, that lead to productivity and enterprise development and that increase social cohesion. High quality jobs can mostly be found in big enterprises and in urban areas, whereas very small enterprises usually offer lower job quality. Both aspects are significant when deciding on actions to support value chain development.

A better understanding of the role, which women play in value chain (VC) development, could help in achieving the goal for upgrading women's position within the chain. In order to address job creation and gender equality with value chain development, analysis has to be considered as a key aspect in the process. It ensures making the right decision in the selection of sectors, finding growth potential and understanding underlying reasons for limitations in performance and inclusion.

Furthermore, adding gender-disaggregated data and information and looking at non-visible actors – such as women - could also be taken into account as important activities to promote GSVC development.

To illustrate this, Merten Sievers used the example of the production of rattan chairs in Vietnam for IKEA to show how to improve the situation of female labor participation in value chains.

To empower their role, a handbook on working conditions and recommendations for factory owners was developed, which improved the labor situation and working conditions of women in the rattan chair value chain. Another example the speaker cited is the honey value chain in Ethiopia. The chain is losing competiveness because the value chain does not integrate products made by women, such as honey beer. Women are selling honey beer to increase their income, but their knowledge could be used for the profit of the value chain.

Referring to these examples, the speaker stressed the need for strengthening the visibility of women's work in VCs for future activities in the MENA region. "A larger participation of women in MENA economies is likely to set free hidden resources for growth", said the speaker closing the conference key note speech.
Making gender sensitive value chains work in MENA

Following the previous illustration of women’s formal participation in the labor market worldwide, Nele Wasmuth, EconoWin Program Coordinator, shed light on the informal sector. Many women, especially in developing countries and countries in transition, are working in informal labor conditions and are therefore not counted as formal participants in labor markets. Women’s work is often not recognized and poorly paid. However, several studies on the MENA region and worldwide prove that economic growth would increase, if the gender gap in labor market participation were to be become smaller.

Nele Wasmuth explained that women are usually involved in the invisible lower echelons of a value chain. Many women work in less skilled and low wage jobs that offer few opportunities for increasing income and for strengthening their market position. Regarding this situation, the speaker highlighted the importance of greater integration of women in value chains in the future, "so that women gain ownership to become active themselves for economic growth in Middle East and North Africa". Aside from the economic aspect, Nele Wasmuth underlined the fact that economic empowerment is a basic human right enabling women to do better in many other areas such as family health, children’s education or the protection of sick or elderly family members.

What did EconoWin do to empower women in value chains? Firstly, the GSVC analysis was based on a participatory approach and focused on the economic situation of women in the respective value chain. The analysis was carried out by the stakeholders themselves making them the “analysts” of their own situation for improving their own economic situation. Secondly, the stakeholders developed a plan together looking at what they themselves can do to improve the situation and remove bottlenecks within the VC. Thirdly, actions were facilitated by local organisations supported by EconoWin. This approach encouraged self-initiative among stakeholders and made processes transparent, documented and transferable. Nele Wasmuth emphasized several success factors accounting for the positive impact (see EconoWin Profile) of the GSVC projects on both product upgrading and improved market access as well as on the income and empowerment of women working in the value chain. The participatory analysis creates identification with the VC development process and as a result more dynamism in the jointly selected initiatives. Reliability and communication among the stakeholders lead to project ownership and a strong commitment of the different actors involved in the project. Furthermore, the “right” government support is important to create positive results. Existing business structures and networks allow stronger economic empowerment. Finally, to find the right time is an important factor to promote the success of such a project in the MENA region as the experience of the argane’s value chain in
Morocco shows (see report on working group 3: Integrating Value Chains in Global Markets).

To close the speech, Nele Wasmuth pointed out that strategic future aims need to be realized. It is important to bring a bottom-up approach to policy makers and promote the integration of the GSVC approach into national policies. "Where can governments play a role and in which steps could governments come in with incentive rules and regulations?"

These questions should be discussed within the course of the conference to develop ideas on future activities involving decision makers in charge of drafting and implementing regional strategies for inclusive growth.
Using the GSVC Approach to ignite Inclusive Growth

A panel discussion with Eng. Mohammed Khreisha and Dr. Luai Jraisat from Jordan, Nele Wasmuth and Merten Sievers highlighted the added value the GSVC approach can bring to national strategies of inclusive growth and how to integrate it, using Jordan’s experience as an example.

First, a short film on two GSVC projects in Jordan was shown. The projects, supporting the canned and pickled food processing sector in the province of Ajloun and the dairy processing sector in the province of Jerash, were implemented in partnership with three main civil society organizations: Jordan River Foundation in Ajloun, Microfund for Women and The Royal Scientific Society in Jerash. Over four hundred women were enrolled in various activities and training within the program. The project allowed the women to reach out for knowledge, networking and understanding of the surrounding environment for the sake of achieving an added value for their work products.

The panel discussion started with a presentation by Eng. Mohammed Khreisha, General Manager of IRADA, Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) on the success of the integration of the GSVC approach into government strategies in Jordan. The speaker stressed the importance of understanding the women's situation in the MENA region, which he described as one of the success factors for the implementation of the projects. Furthermore, the involvement of the women themselves as actors in the value chains is important for a positive impact on economic and social development. He pointed out that partnerships facilitate decision making and channeling of available funds in order to integrate the approach at government level. In order to change the mindset of the people in the target region, one has to make solid partnerships. The aim of the partnership between the Royal Scientific Society, NGO in Jordan, and GIZ as a supporting international agency is to integrate the GSVC approach into the IRADA program. The IRADA program for entrepreneurial projects in the private sector in Jordan is funded by MOPIC representing the government and managed by the Royal Scientific Society as a civil society organization.

Dr. Luai Jraisat, Expert, Promoting Local Economic Development Program in Jordan, Ministry of Interior (MOI), followed with a technical presentation of value chains as a development tool and the Jordanian Government’s approach towards effective value chains. Describing the implementation of VCs in Jordan, he highlighted three main factors leading to a successful GSVC integration into national policies in Jordan: collaboration, coordination and cooperation played a crucial role in the integration of GSVC at government level in Jordan.
"Sharing experiences, success stories and knowledge is important to implement projects on GSVC promotion", the speaker explained.

A discussion followed between the four panelists as well as with the conference participants. The attendees shared different concerns regarding the economic and social importance of GSVC.

All participants agreed that value chain projects need to be implemented with equality involving all stakeholders like governments, communities, private sectors and families.

Closing the panel discussion, Natasha Walker stressed the importance of focusing during the conference's afternoon sessions on how to ensure and measure the benefit to women, "how can we really ensure that not just their families are benefiting, not just the state is benefiting, but women themselves are benefiting?"
Getting to know some Gender Sensitive Value Chain Projects

In the 'market place' four GSVC projects from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia were presented by means of fair booths of the partner organizations that implemented the projects:

- SEKEM/ Naturetex in Egypt: Empowering women for a balanced society
- The Jordan River Foundation (JRF): The gender sensitive value chain of pickled products, Jordan
- Association Tunisienne pour le Leadership, l'Auto-développement et la Solidarité (ATLAS): The myrtle gender sensitive value chain, Tunisia
- Association Marocaine d’Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE): The dry fig gender sensitive value chain, Morocco

Representatives of each project prepared a fair booth with exhibits and posters offering information, materials and products of their projects. The conference participants walked around and found out about the implementation, impact and prospective activities of the different GSVC projects.
Becoming active in the Gender Sensitive Value Chain Think Tank

Working group on
Governmental strategies on Gender Sensitive Value Chains and Inclusive Growth
by Frank Wältring,
Expert on territorial economic development & innovation promotion at Mesopartner

In this working group the participants focused on government strategies for GSVC and inclusive growth. Two key questions guided the discussion: "How do you integrate the rapid appraisal and the participatory GSVC approach into a regional strategy design?" and "What are (the) key obstacles you see in your own working environment to integrate a stronger bottom up and inclusive approach into regional development work?"

Frank Wältring reflected with the participants on key criteria for successful regional economic development with an emphasis on gender. Examples of the results of the group's brainstorming session included involvement and participation of stakeholders, inclusive job creation, new well defined projects and innovation in the region, equity of remuneration, support from government level and heightening awareness for men and women. In order to promote a more participatory approach with an emphasis on gender when drafting regional strategies, several criteria were developed by the group, such as the creation of common goals between national and local stakeholders, documentation of experiences in the GSVC projects and stronger exchange to encourage learning and to share experiences.

During the working session the following question was raised: "What are (the) necessary next steps from your perspective?"

As a result, the group identified defined entry points for the promotion of GSVC approaches at government level. Participants pointed out that they need to bring the policy makers to the projects and reflect with them on the same topic. Another important point mentioned was the need for better communication between all stakeholders involved. Furthermore, it was discussed that innovative sectors for GSVC in addition to agriculture and processing should be promoted.

Regarding social development, actors need to reflect on their traditional mind-sets and to take responsibility within their own workplaces to assure integration.

Working group on
Challenges and Success Factors of Gender Sensitive Value Chain Initiatives
by Angelica Senders
Expert on Gender in Value Chains at Agri-ProFocus

In this workshop the participants discussed the challenges and success factors for GSVC development. The objective was to develop ideas for activities to make gender sensitive value chains a reality in practice.
Defining ‘value chain development’ and ‘gender sensitive’, Angelica Senders stressed that GSVC development does not only have social objectives to make women benefit from VC development, but that there are also business arguments to develop value chains in a gender sensitive manner. Both women and men dominated value chains can be developed in a gender sensitive manner. In order to support gender sensitive interventions and to offer instruments addressing gender based constraints, the speaker presented a strategy consisting of four components: 1. Coordination and network development, 2. Brokering for expertise, 3. Platform for learning and 4. Innovation communities.

Referring to the presented strategy, the facilitator encouraged the participants to reflect on their own experiences of challenges and successes of GSVC initiatives in the MENA region. For this part the group was divided into four small groups, each working on one of the four components. The participants discussing the component of coordination and network development, for example, concluded that all actors have to be involved in the process: governments, donors, organizations, civil society and NGOs. In addition, knowledge of local context is very important in order to illustrate to donors and international organisations the situation regarding local conditions, and in particular, values in the area where they are implementing the projects.
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Working group on Integrating Value Chains in Global Markets by Hildegard Vogelmann Coordinator of the GIZ Program "Training and Promotion for Youth Employment" in Tunisia

In this session the participants considered in detail the question "How to integrate value chains in global markets?" in light of the experience of Zoubida Charrouf, Research Professor at the University of Rabat, and Mina Ait Taleb, President of the Cooperative Taitmatine. They referred to their successful experiences of the integration of the Moroccan argane value chain into global markets. Both of their speeches became the basis for further discussions.

Zoubida Charrouf explained that at the beginning of her work for the argane value chain, argane oil was produced by women working in home-based businesses in rural areas in Morocco. 95% of the women were illiterate and did not leave their houses without the permission of their husbands. Marketing and selling of argane oil was executed by the women's husbands and brothers. Deep cultural norms and traditions about working women hindered women's further involvement in the value chain. Another challenge was upgrading the product, as the argane oil was at first exclusively part of the informal sector and sold in the streets or markets by individuals. At that time, argane oil was an unknown product in Morocco as well as internationally. Within years argane oil had become well-known as a cosmetic and food product. As a result, producers had to deal more and more with international competition.

Zoubida Charrouf also highlighted the main success factors for accessing global markets. One was the special focus on science and research to upgrade argane oil’s quality. As a researcher she analyzed the entire argane oil value chain from a scientific point of view. Training, networking and exchange with other cooperatives were also important factors of success. A strategic marketing plan and international presence supported by media played a crucial role for integrating global markets. The funding by external donors and later on by Moroccan government organizations was a consequence of the strong presence in international media. Another success factor was the cooperation with the private sector: global companies buy argane oil and provide funding for social activities as a part of a benefits sharing scheme. Referring to the entire development process of the value chain, Zoubida Charrouf stressed that time and patience are the key aspects needed for successful integration in international markets.

Finally, Zoubida Charrouf referred to the social impact of argane oil VC development and how it has contributed to the personal advancement of women. Women have gained self-confidence, independence and ownership. These values are in turn transmitted to their children and families. Referring to her own story, Mina Ait Taleb explained how she was able to expand production, gain more customers and recruit more and more women for the cooperative she leads. Today, she is also thinking about creating her own business.
Prospective Future Actions for Inclusive Growth with Gender Sensitive Value Chains

After the working group session, conference participants gathered again in the conference hall for the open panel discussion on findings and future prospects for GSVC. The open panel was composed of the summaries of the three working groups provided by the groups’ speakers and by participants who wanted to enter into the discussion.

The speaker of the working group on challenges and success factors of GSVC initiatives pointed out that most of the group participants were practitioners working on the ground of VCs and/or gender projects. One result highlighted in the group was the need to integrate all stakeholders such as governments, donors, organizations, civil society and NGOs in the process of a GSVC project. Civil society and NGOs should have more of a say as in most projects donors and international organisations dominate the decision making.

"How can we assure that what the different stakeholders are doing becomes part of the policy and part of the government? And how can it be sustainable?"

The speaker of the working group on government strategies summarized the main criteria for successful regional economic development with a gender lens as equity, equality and social equality as well as government ownership. She explained the next steps that need to be taken for the promotion of GSVC approaches at government level:

Firstly, governments have to be addressed and to take ownership and to stand up for the gender link in the value chain. Another important step was, in the group's opinion, to bring practitioners up to the policy level, in the same way that government representatives have to understand how the practitioners are working on the ground.

The open panel discussions continued with the feedback by the speaker of the working group on global markets. She explained the key aspects for successful integration of the argane value chain in global markets, highlighting the importance of science and research for upgrading the product, also according to international quality standards. Another success factor of the
argane value chain was to target women in particular as experts who have dominated the argane sector in Morocco for many years. The third key aspect for successful integration was the cooperation with international companies who not only bring about the transfer of technology but also invest in community development. Finally, strong product promotion fuelled the success of argane at international level.

**Natasha Walker** summarized the main conclusions of the open panel discussion as:

1. GSVCs have to be integrated into government work and policy strategies; this is also the lesson learnt by successfully implemented GSVC projects;
2. Training local experts is an important instrument to strengthen expertise on GSVC and to create multipliers and guarantee sustainability;
3. Women working in value chains have to be promoted since their contribution has a great development impact on societies and in economies in the MENA region.

**Nele Wasmuth** added two more conclusions: the importance of science and universities and the variety of ways for integrating GSVC into government policies.

To close the conference, Nele Wasmuth stressed what was in her opinion the most important conference result: “that it is worthwhile to continue working all together on GSVC”. There are niche markets and value chains in MENA with high participation of women like myrtle in Tunisia, prickly pears in Morocco, dairy products in Jordan and organic cotton textiles in Egypt that show potential for national economic growth. National policies should enable these markets and provide the framework conditions for their development. Finally, she gave the example of the Naturetex puppets in Egypt as being a product currently creating a demand in MENA by itself. This means that in order to develop a successful value chain for a particular product, there does not necessarily have to be a demand for the product, "you can create the demand yourself!"

Nele Wasmuth motivated the participants to continue their work on GSVC.
Field Visit to Zaghouan

Meeting the Dog Rose Value Chain Stakeholders

About 80 participants joined the day trip to visit the Dog Rose Value Chain in Zaghouan, one of the GSVC projects supported by EconoWin in Tunisia. First, the group met Houssem Bejhadj, GSVC Expert, who explained the processes of sub-sector selection, GSVC analysis and project implementation in Zaghouan.

In 2012, two international and two national GSVC experts put together a diagnostic team composed of up to ten participants, mostly women involved in the agricultural process, in order to analyze the dog rose value chain. From the very beginning all parties involved in the value chain like the National Handicrafts Office (ONA) and Regional Commissariat for Agricultural Development (CRDA) as well as supporting structures like the College of Agriculture in Mograne (ESAM) and Agricultural Investment Promotion Agency (APIA) were integrated in the process. The team of experts worked together on the GSVC methodology and developed a map of the VC, pointing out the different functions and actors of the VC. Furthermore, the experts analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the dog rose VC. The speaker highlighted the importance of concentrating during the process on the role of women in the VC and how to improve their situation through different activities.

The expert shared with the group some information on the dog rose, its derived products and production processes. The dog rose is the most common crop in the Zaghouan area in Tunisia. Out of the dog rose blossom, distilled water and essential oils are produced which are used in diverse ways for alimential, cosmetic and health products. Zaghouan, for example, is well-
known for its pastries (Kaak Warka) and soap made from dog rose distilled water.
Training supported by the partner organization ONA was offered to increase women’s knowledge of production, conservation, packaging and labeling of distilled dog rose water and pastries. The women learned about harvesting and distillation techniques and were encouraged to try new ways of processing the dog rose and its derivate such as soaps and herbal teas, a crucial factor in exploring new commercial opportunities. CRDA was in charge of the set-up of women’s cooperatives and technical support during this process. ESAM was responsible for the organization of a round table on essential dog rose oil and preparation of a dog rose cultivation data sheet.

The participants met the following stakeholders of the dog rose GSVC at the Association de la Promotion de l’Eglantier à Zaghouan (APEZ): Najib Derouiche, President of the Association de la Promotion de l’Eglantier à Zaghouan (APEZ), Rihab Tawil, Member of APEZ and Responsible for Operations; Habib Alamami, Regional Agricultural Development of Zaghouan. They referred to their experiences in the dog rose value chain, for instance how APEZ was created to support gender sensitive value chain development and how they are integrating dog rose products and derivate into tourism and culture activities. As a result, sales opportunities increase and the dog rose value chain is increasingly integrated into regional development strategies.

After the presentations, the participants had the opportunity to learn more about the dog rose and its products visiting a booth presenting dog rose water, soap, essence oil and pastries.
EconoWin Profile

The Regional Program "Economic Integration of Women in the MENA Region" (EconoWin) is commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. EconoWin works along four areas of cooperation:

- the engagement for a positive perception of women’s active economic role,
- the improvement of working conditions and career opportunities in companies,
- the empowerment of women to find a better place in economic value chains,
- and the support of professional orientation for women.

In 2012 EconoWin developed together with OXFAM-Quebec’s Regional Economic Empowerment of Women Project (REEWP) the Gender Sensitive Value Chain (GSVC) methodology as an innovative and market-driven way to both promote the competitiveness of value chains and to improve the economic situation and empowerment of women entrepreneurs and of women in enterprises.

Over the course of 2012 and 2013, seven projects, following the methodology of the GSVC approach, were implemented in EconoWin’s target countries Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The implementation included the training of national consultants, the identification of project partners and agricultural subsectors by an open call for projects, a rapid value chain appraisal in 7 locations as well as a one-year facilitation of value chain initiatives focusing on various agricultural sub-sectors like dairies, pickled vegetables, fruit processing, aromatic oils and organic cotton textile production.

A short term evaluation carried out in 2013 - barely a year after the start of activities - stated that 27% of women producers were already selling more products, 20% had increased their earnings, 26% had reduced their production costs and 23% had improved the quality of their products. In addition, 65% of women entrepreneurs had significantly extended their business networks to other producers and enterprises and about 63% had been able to gain access to supporting services. Finally, 85% of the women involved had seen a rise in their levels of self-confidence with regard to their production activities and 77% felt that their status within their communities had been significantly enhanced.
## Conference Program

**Tuesday, December 9, 2014, Venue: Hotel Carthage Thalasso Resort - Gammarth**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td><strong>Welcome &amp; Introduction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nele Wasmuth, EconoWin Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>Monia Gastli, EconoWin Tunisia</td>
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<td>09:45</td>
<td><strong>Value Chain Development, Employment Creation and Gender</strong></td>
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<td>Merten Sievers, Global Coordinator</td>
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<td>Value Chain Development and Entrepreneurship Training</td>
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<td>International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva</td>
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<td>10:15</td>
<td><strong>Gender Sensitive Value Chains &amp; Inclusive Growth: Practical Experience in MENA Countries &amp; Strategic Orientations</strong></td>
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<td>Nele Wasmuth, EconoWin Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>11:15</td>
<td><strong>PANEL DISCUSSION</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>THE IMPACT OF GENDER SENSITIVE VALUE CHAIN INITIATIVES</strong></td>
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<td>Eng. Mohammad Khreisha, IRADA General Manager, Royal Scientific Society</td>
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<td>IRADA, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>On Partnerships to Enhance Women's Economic Development: The Gender Sensitive Value Chains Initiative in Jordan</td>
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<td>Dr. Luai Jraisat, Expert, “Promoting Local Economic Development in Jordan” Program</td>
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<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
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<td>On Value Chains as a Development Tool: Approach Towards Effective Value Chains by the Government of Jordan</td>
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<td>Nele Wasmuth, EconoWin Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>Merten Sievers, Global Coordinator, Value Chain Development at ILO Geneva</td>
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| 12:00 | MARKET PLACE  
VISIT SOME GSVC PROJECTS 2012 - 2014 SUPPORTED BY ECONOWIN |
|      | SEKEM/ Naturetex in Egypt  
Empowering women for a balanced society  
The Jordan River Foundation (JRF)  
The gender sensitive value chain of pickled products  
Association marocaine d’appui à la promotion de la petite entreprise (AMAPPE)  
The dry fig gender sensitive value chain  
Association Tunisienne pour le Leadership, l’Auto-développement et la Solidarité (ATLAS)  
The myrtle gender sensitive value chain |
| 14:15 | WORKING GROUPS - PARALLEL SESSIONS |
|      | WORKING GROUP 1  
Governmental strategies on Gender Sensitive Value Chains & Inclusive growth  
facilitated by Frank Wältring, Expert on territorial economic development & innovation promotion at Mesopartner, International Consultants Network |
|      | WORKING GROUP 2  
Challenges and Success Factors of Gender Sensitive Value Chain Initiatives  
facilitated by Angelica Senders, Expert on Gender in Value Chains at the NGO Agri-ProFocus, based in the Netherlands |
|      | WORKING GROUP 3  
Integrating Value Chains in Global Markets  
facilitated by Hildegard Vogelmann, Coordinator of the GIZ Program “Training and Promotion for Youth Employment” in Tunisia  
Special input by Zoubida Charrouf, Research Professor at the University of Rabat and by Mina Ait Taleb, President of the Cooperative Taitmatine on the example of the argane’s value chain in Morocco |
|      | WORKING GROUP 4  
Open Space, Subject according to the decision of participants, facilitated by Natasha Walker |
| 15:45 | OPEN PANEL DISCUSSION ON LEARNINGS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS |
| 17:00 | CLOSING OF CONFERENCE & EVENING COCKTAIL |
### Overview of GSVC Projects supported by EconoWin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Egypt</strong></td>
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<td>Organic textiles</td>
<td>Sharqiyah</td>
<td>SEKEM/Naturetex</td>
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<td><strong>Jordan</strong></td>
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<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>Jerash</td>
<td>Microfund for Women (MFW)</td>
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<td>Royal Scientific Society (RSS)</td>
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<td>Bottled &amp; pickled products</td>
<td>Ajloun</td>
<td>Jordan River Foundation (JRF)</td>
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<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>Chefchaouen</td>
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<td>Prickly pears</td>
<td>Sidi Ifni</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Dog rose</td>
<td>Zaghouan</td>
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<td>Myrtle</td>
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