Gabon: Fostering business development to empower women

Investment Promotion and Competitiveness Project

**Description**

**Purpose:** To improve the investment climate and to foster enterprise development through business environment reforms and stimulating Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with an emphasis on increasing women employment through skill-building and business opportunities.

**Expected Results (include):** 25,500 Gabonese, of which half will be women, are expected to benefit from new jobs and skills by the project’s end in 2019.

**IBRD Financing:** $18 million

**Development Challenge**

Despite strong economic growth over the past decade, the Gabon’s unemployment rate is 16 percent and female unemployment rate is 27 percent. Women are particularly affected in that they represent only 29 percent of wage and salaried workers but 63 percent of vulnerable employment, which is unpaid family workers and own-account workers. Households headed by females, which account for 20 percent, are more likely to be living below the poverty line than households headed by males.

**Project Description**

The project is designed to support the Government’s strategy to promote Gabon as a sound investment spot, and build new sectors in the economy. It will provide for a single, one-stop shop for businesses and a new streamlined business registry with a web-based, e-database and help improve access to financial services, particularly for women and youth, as a step towards improving their chances of opening their own small businesses. The project targets women by supporting conditions to help stimulate SMEs, such as a Women’s Business Center to support female entrepreneurs with advisory services, training, and access to business opportunities.

For more information: