

## **Conference on Investment and Finance of the ICT Sector in the Arab Region Hammamet, Tunisia, 9-10 May 2013**

Part of the Arab Forum on the ICT Sector (Hammamet, Tunisia, 7-10 May 2013)

### ***Preliminary Information Note***

#### **A. Background**

When compared to the information and communication technology (ICT) sector of countries that have developed their knowledge-based economies, the ICT sector in the Arab region remains underdeveloped. Investments in the sector have been limited and new developmental funds are few. Research has shown that the development of suitable financing instruments for the ICT sector coupled with institutional reforms supporting innovation and promoting competitiveness and ICT entrepreneurship are essential components for the development of sustainable knowledge-based economies in the Arab region. Investing in the ICT sector would create new job opportunities for the youth and skilled population, vitalize the region's economies and lead to further socio-economic benefits and rewards.

The Tunis Agenda, outcome of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), stressed the need to enhance financial mechanisms aimed at building the ICT sector in developing countries and the importance of capacity-building to achieve this objective.

The Conference on Investment and Finance of the ICT Sector in the Arab Region, subject of this information note, is jointly organized by the Union of Arab Banks and ESCWA, during 9-10 May 2013, in Hammamet, Tunisia. The Conference is organized as part of the Arab Forum on the ICT Sector, and will be preceded by the Expert Group Meeting on Investment, Research, Development and Innovation in the ICT Sector, during 7-8 May 2013, in the same venue.

#### **B. Objectives**

The main objective of the Conference is to promote ICT sector financing and investments, and business entrepreneurship. It represents a panel for discussion and exchange of experiences and views on strengthening the Arab ICT sector and the knowledge based economies in the period that follows the Arab spring.

#### **C. Topics**

The topics that will be addressed during the Conference include:

- ICT sector competitiveness and contribution to reducing the impact of the economic recession;
- Emerging/investment opportunities offered by the ICT sector;
- Banking sector, venture capital, loans and investment bankers processes
- Capital markets, venture capital funds and unions of investors, and stock exchange
- Incubators, accelerators and future outlook for investment in the ICT sector;
- Successful entrepreneurship in the ICT sector.

## **D. Outcomes**

The main outcome of the Conference will be a declaration that iterates the recommendations emanating from the Conference deliberations.

## **E. Organization, venue and dates**

The Conference is jointly organized by the Union of Arab Banks and ESCWA, during 9-10 May 2013, at the Russelior Hotel in Hammamet, Tunisia, as part of the Arab Forum on the ICT Sector that is held during 7-10 May 2013, the same venue.

The Arab Forum on the ICT Sector encompasses the following two joint events:

- (1) Expert Group Meeting on Investment, Research, Development and Innovation in the ICT Sector, during 7-8 May 2013 [*Participation at no cost and by invitation*]; and
- (2) Conference on Investment and Finance of the ICT Sector in the Arab Region, during 9-10 May 2013 [*Participation might include UAB fees*].

## **F. Participation**

The Conference will involve the participation of high-level decision makers from the financial and banking sector in the Arab region, as well as leaders from business incubators, venture capitalists and investment companies. Participation also includes experts from research, development and innovation (RDI) centres, incubators and technology parks involved in promoting the ICT sector, and representatives from international and regional organizations, civil society and private sector institutions, and decision makers from the Arab countries.

## **G. Working languages**

The working languages of the Forum will be Arabic, English and French. There will be simultaneous translation among the three languages.

## **H. Additional information and correspondence**

Additional information is available through the [Forum Web page](#). Correspondences, submissions, and inquiries should be addressed to:

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