



SMEs are a major source of new job creation in emerging and developing countries. In the MENA region, it is estimated that micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) account for 80–90 percent of all businesses. However, despite their systemic importance, SMEs continue to face major challenges when it comes to access to finance. Lack of credit information and lack of collateral are just two of the many reasons why financial institutions are less exposed to SMEs than to larger and more established firms. COVID-19 has made the situation much worse for the region’s SMEs. The pandemic poses challenges of a scope and scale unprecedented in modern times. Millions of businesses are closed, countless jobs have been lost. The hardest hit are SMEs in the tourism and entertainment industries, which have been battered by lockdowns and travel restrictions. In response to the crisis, many governments across the region have scaled up credit guarantee schemes to tackle the urgent liquidity problem faced by SMEs and to stimulate an economic recovery through rebuilding the SME sector. In partnership with the SME Finance Forum, Kafalah SME Guarantee Program is hosting a MENA regional conference on the role of credit guarantee schemes in rebuilding the SMEs post-COVID-19.

The conference will take place on **September 6-7, 2021** and will cover: the impact of COVID-19 and the role of guarantee programs, supply chain finance, digitalization, alternative data, reviving tourism, early-stage finance, equity guarantees, and financing technology-led SMEs.

KSA Time	Monday, September 6th	KSA Time	Tuesday, September 7th
		12:00 – 13:30	Board meeting (by invitation only)
14:00 – 14:20	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Fahad al-Shathri, Chairman of Kafalah - Saleh al-Rasheed, CEO of Monshaat <p>Keynote Speech: The Impact of COVID and the Role of the Guarantee Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Khater Abi Habib, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kafalat, Lebanon 	14:00 – 14:15	<p>Recap and Summary of Day Ahead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homam Hashem, CEO of Kafalah
14:20 – 15:00	<p>Plenary panel: Digitalization and its Impact on Guarantee Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nagla Bahr, Managing Director, Credit Guarantee Company of Egypt - Maria Laura Garcia Conejero, Former General Manager, FOGABA - Soo-yo Kim, Director of International Affairs, KODIT - Humaid Mudhaffr, Director of Business Development, Kafalah - Katrin Sturm, Secretary General, AECM (moderator) 	14:15 – 15:00	<p>Plenary: Beyond Stimulus, Forbearance, and Deferment: What's Next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bill Briggs, former acting associate Administrator, SBA - Tony Hadley, Senior VP, Experian - Homam Hashem, CEO of Kafalah - Nagla Bahr, Managing Director, Credit Guarantee Company of Egypt - Matt Gamser, CEO, SME Finance Forum (moderator)
15:00 – 15:05	Break	15:00 – 15:05	Break
15:05 – 15:15	<p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mohamed Al-Malki, CEO of SME Bank - Homam Hashem, CEO of Kafalah 		<p>Panel 1: Credit Guarantees in Reviving the Tourism and Entertainment Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shamsah Fatimah Dhala Principal Investment Officer, IFC - Jesse Weinberg, Head of SME Customer Segment at FNB - Dr. Mohammed Lutfi Al Jafari, CEO Jordan loan guarantee corporation - Katrin Sturm, Secretary General, AECM (moderator)
15:15 – 15:50	<p>Panel 1: Can alternative data transform SME finance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharma Aditya, Head SME credit risk, Standard Chartered - Konstantinos Tsanis, Alternative data expert, IFC - Matt Gamser, CEO, SME Finance Forum (moderator) <p>Panel 2: The future of early-stage finance and equity guarantees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abdelmoughite Abdelmoumen, Head of Strategy and Cooperation at CCG Finance - Ebrahim al-Kandari, Director General, National Fund for SME Development, Kuwait - Khalid Abdulla al-Mana, Executive Director, Business Finance at Qatar Development Bank - Jeroen Hartevelde, Manager, MASSIF Fund, FMO (moderator) 	15:05 – 15:50	<p>Panel 2: Supply Chain Finance: The Role of Guarantee Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Khaled El-Rashed, Head of SMEs, ANB - Colin Sharp, SVP, C2FO - Kevin Day, CEO, HPD Lendscape - Matt Gamser, CEO, SME Finance Forum (moderator)
15:50 – 16:00	<p>Closing Remarks for Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homam Hashem, CEO of Kafalah 	15:50 – 16:00	<p>Final Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Khalid Abdulla Al Mana, Executive Director, Business Finance at Qatar Development Bank - Homam Hashem, CEO of Kafalah

About Kafalah SME Guarantee Program

Kafalah Program is a program launched by the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF) and Saudi banks. The program aims to promote financing to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

About the SME Finance Forum

The SME Finance Forum works to expand access to finance to these small and medium businesses through its global membership network of 200+ financial institutions, technology companies and development finance institutions to share knowledge, spur innovation, and promote the growth of SMEs. The SME Finance Forum was established in 2012 by the G20 and is managed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC).