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Workshop on "Optimizing Growth and Resilience through Evidence-based Policies and Budgeting"
October 26-30, 2026
Cairo, Egypt

The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center (METAC) and Strategy, Policy and Review Department are organizing a **regional workshop** on **"Optimizing Growth and Resilience through Evidence-based Policies and Budgeting"** in Amman, Jordan during **October 26-30, 2026**. The workshop will be conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Arabic and French.

The five-day workshop builds on the virtual course delivered March 30–April 1, 2026, that showcased actionable tools for integrating distributional considerations and women's economic participation into macroeconomic policy. This workshop will shift from introduction to application, giving participants more time to work through country-relevant examples, use analytical tools, and translate evidence into practical policy and budgeting options.

Sessions will focus on deeper engagement with the tools and methods introduced virtually, including budget tagging exercises, macroeconomic and distributional impact assessments of women's economic participation, and the IMF's TaxFit model to analyze policy impacts on labor force incentives and inequality. The agenda incorporates regional priorities such as demographic shifts and female labor force participation, with a particular focus on policy applications in the Middle East and North Africa region. Participants will also have opportunities to present their own research, country experiences, and policy questions, promoting collaborative learning and exchange. At the conclusion of the course, teams will offer short presentations, drawing upon the tools and materials covered across the virtual and in-person components, to showcase country-specific quantitative analysis on the macroeconomic impacts of women's economic participation and policy solutions to close these gaps. A preliminary program of the workshop is attached.

Annex: Workshop Preliminary Program

METAC Regional Workshop on Optimizing Growth and Resilience through Evidence-based Policies and Budgeting

October 26 – 30, 2026
Cairo – Egypt

Preliminary Program

DAY 1, OCTOBER 26, 2026: Women's Economic Participation: Identifying Progress, Barriers, and Policies	
9:00–9:30 a.m.	**Welcome and Introduction** Overview of workshop objectives.
9:30–10:00 a.m.	**Introductions and Interactive Roundtable** (All Participants) Participants will introduce themselves and share what they hope to learn during the workshop.
10:00–11:00 a.m.	**Recap of Virtual Sessions** (Lisa Kolovich, Duncan MacDonald, and Lauren Keating) The session will review the material covered in the three-day virtual workshop.
11:00–11:30 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	**Show me the Evidence: The Link between Distributional and Macroeconomic Outcomes** (IMF, Lisa Kolovich) How do distributional issues shape macroeconomic performance? This session will review the evidence and key channels through which unequal access to education, health, finance, and quality jobs can affect labor supply, productivity, resource allocation, and long-run growth and resilience.
12:30–13:30 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
13:30–14:30 p.m.	**Hands-on Activity** (IMF, Anastasia Janzer) Participants will explore a user-friendly dashboard that highlights key distributional constraints relevant for macroeconomic outcomes and provides back-of-the-envelope calculations for economic costs. Participants should bring their laptops (with Excel) to the session.
14:30–15:30 p.m.	**Macroeconomics and Distributional Impacts in a Shock-Prone World** (IMF, Lisa Kolovich) In an increasingly shock-prone global environment, emerging forces such as artificial intelligence, volatile energy prices, and geopolitical conflicts are reshaping economic dynamics. This session explores how these shocks propagate through the economy and generate uneven distributional effects.
15:30–16:00 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK

16:00–17:00 p.m.	**Microdata I: ILOSTAT** (IMF, Anastasia Janzer) Participants will learn to access ILO data using ILOSTAT tool.
DAY 2, OCTOBER 27, 2026: A Deeper Dive into Data and Analysis to Support Policy Design	
9:00–10:30 a.m.	**Financial Inclusion** (IMF, Lisa Kolovich) The session will provide an overview of how financial inclusion can support stronger macroeconomic outcomes and advance women's economic empowerment. It will also discuss policy options to expand access to and use of financial services and will introduce the IMF's Financial Access Survey database.
10:30–11:00 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
11:00–12:30 p.m.	**Microdata II: DHS and WB** (IMF, Anastasia Janzer) Participants will learn to access DHS data using StatCompiler and the World Bank's Gender Disaggregated Labor Database.
12:30–13:30 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
13:30–15:30 p.m.	**Excel Tools for Data Analysis** (IMF, Lisa Kolovich) This session will teach practical Excel-based tools, such as pivot tables and charts, that can strengthen and improve analysis of micro-level data. Participants should bring laptops with Excel.
15:30–16:00 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK
16:00–17:00 p.m.	**Team Exercise: Brainstorming on final presentations** Participants will join one of four teams, each of which will offer a presentation on the last day of the workshop. Teams should aim to: 1. Define the issue - what is a challenge facing women's economic participation in your region or country/countries? What are the macroeconomic impacts of this challenge? 2. What is the size of the issue - gather gender disaggregated data using the platforms discussed in the workshop. How large are the gaps? Do they vary across the region? Can data be disaggregated further for a more robust analysis? i.e., by age, income, rurality. 3. What could be done about it - policy response. What has been done elsewhere? Each team should identify one or more speakers for the final presentation. Presentations should be about 15 minutes long, which will be followed by a 15-minute Q&A session.

DAY 3, OCTOBER 28, 2026: An Introduction to Taxfit

9:00–10:15 a.m.	**TaxFit Introduction** This session will introduce the TaxFit tool and its policy applications, showing how household-level data can be used to assess the fiscal, distributional, and labor-market implications of tax and benefit reforms. Participants will review the tool's core structure, required inputs, and types of policy questions it can help answer.
10:15–10:45 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
10:45–12:30 p.m.	**TaxFit Country Case Studies** This session will present selected country applications of TaxFit, illustrating how the tool can be used to compare reform options, identify distributional tradeoffs, and communicate policy results. Case studies will highlight practical lessons on data preparation, calibration, and interpreting outputs for policy dialogue.
12:30–13:30 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
13:30–15:00 p.m.	**TaxFit – Hands-on Training** In this hands-on session, participants will work through a guided TaxFit exercise (Excel or Stata). The training will focus on setting up reform scenarios, reviewing simulated impacts across households, and translating model outputs into clear fiscal and distributional policy messages.
15:15–15:30 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK
15:30–17:00 p.m.	**Team exercise: Continue to work on final presentations** Teams will use this session to continue developing their final presentations, refining the analytical narrative and strengthening the link from diagnostics to policy recommendations. Presentations should clearly identify the macrocritical gap, summarize the key supporting evidence (data/indicators), and outline a focused set of feasible policy priorities to address barriers to women's economic empowerment.

DAY 4, OCTOBER 29, 2026: An Introduction to Modeling and Gender Budgeting

9:00–9:30 a.m.	**Linking Fiscal Policy Decisions with Equality Outcomes** (IMF, Lauren Keating) This session looks at why countries choose to introduce a gender budgeting reform and will set the foundation for the following sessions on gender budgeting.
9:30–10:30 a.m.	**Introduction to Gender Budgeting** (IMF, Lauren Keating) Overview of gender budgeting practices, the IMF's Four Principles of Gender Budgeting, and trends across regions.

10:30–11:00 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
11:00–12:00 p.m.	**Map: Gender Budget Tagging** (IMF, Lauren Keating) Introduction to gender budget tagging, a tool used to identify and track budget resources that advance national gender equality goals.
12:00–12:30 p.m.	**Analyze: Ex-ante Gender Impact Assessments with Practical Exercise** (Part 1) (IMF, Lauren Keating) Introduction to a key tool in gender budgeting, gender impact assessments. Followed by a breakout exercise where participants will conduct an impact assessment of a budget measure.
12:30–13:30 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
13:30–15:00 p.m.	**Analyze: Ex-ante Gender Impact Assessments with Practical Exercise (Part 2)** (IMF, Lauren Keating) Introduction to a key tool in gender budgeting, gender impact assessments. Followed by a breakout exercise where participants will conduct an impact assessment of a budget measure.
15:00–15:15 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK: TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
15:15–17:00 p.m.	**Team exercise: Continue to work on final presentations** Teams will use this session to continue developing their final presentations, refining the analytical narrative and strengthening the link from diagnostics to policy recommendations. Presentations should clearly identify the macrocritical gap, summarize the key supporting evidence (data/indicators), and outline a focused set of feasible policy priorities to address barriers to women's economic empowerment.

DAY 5, OCTOBER 30, 2026: TEAM PRESENTATIONS

9:00–10:00 a.m.	**Teams Finalize Presentations**
10:00–10:30 a.m.	**1 presentation**
10:30–11:00 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
11:00–12:30 p.m.	**3 presentations**
12:30-13:00 p.m.	**Course evaluations, wrap up and group photo**
13:00 p.m.	**Concluding Lunch**