

Amhara Regional Business Agenda (RBA)

**THE BUSINESS PRIORITIES OF MARGINAL ECONOMIC
ACTORS IN AMHARA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA**



March 2023

Prepared in Partnership with



Disclaimer

The Amhara Regional Business Agenda (RBA) reflects the views of the Amhara business coalition members (business associations, chambers of commerce, and civil society organizations), as well as those of other business community representatives who contributed to the research conducted for the RBA in 2022. Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) consultants developed research tools, collected and analysed data, and drafted the RBA in consultation with the coalition members. The agenda was reviewed in a validation workshop attended by business coalition members in November 2022. The views, opinions, and recommendations expressed here do not reflect the views of CIPE. CIPE's main role in the RBA process was to assist the Amhara coalition of business associations, chambers of commerce, and civil society organizations in launching the initiative, as well as working with the consultant to draft and edit the final version of the agenda.

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CIPE's mission is to strengthen democracy around the globe through private enterprise and market-oriented reform. CIPE is one of the core institutes of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. CIPE has more than 40 years of experience and has carried out more than 1,300 reform programs in more than 100 countries around the globe. CIPE's key program areas include business advocacy, democratic governance, business environment, anti-corruption, and ethics.

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Acronyms

ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
BMOs	Business Membership Organizations
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
CSOs	Civic Society Organizations
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MEAs	Marginal Economic Actors
MFIs	Micro Finance Institutions
MSEs	Micro and Small Enterprises
RBA	Regional Business Agenda
TIN	Tax Identification Number

Foreword

Dear partners, colleagues, and friends,

Business membership organizations (BMOs) such as chambers of commerce, sectorial associations, and women entrepreneurs' associations have an important role to play in the economic development of Ethiopia. Engaging in public-private dialogue (PPD) with government decision-makers to bring about evidence-based policy reform is one of the many facets of their role. In this dialogue process, they can use a multitude of tools and approaches, including business agendas, white papers, policy briefs, and many others.

Business agendas coalesce the business community around common obstacles that obstruct the development of businesses and offer solutions they deem appropriate to remove these obstacles.

I am pleased to welcome the Amhara Regional Business Agenda (RBA). This document was developed in close consultation and collaboration with a coalition of BMOs in the Amhara region, and it contains the priority issues of their members, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), women-owned, youth, and informal businesses. The Amhara RBA also proposes solutions to address them that require the attention and interventions of the regional and local governments. The agenda aims to sustain a rigorous, concrete, and articulate dialogue between the local business community and the public authorities.

MSMEs constitute a significant part of the Ethiopian economy, including in the Amhara region. Women, youth, and informal economic actors are facing numerous challenges, including access to credit, working premises to produce and sell their products, and bureaucracy in the business registration process. These bottlenecks need to be addressed through the active engagement of all stakeholders from both the public and private sectors.

In Ethiopia, CIPE has been providing technical and financial assistance to BMOs for the past 15 years to support their initiatives and strengthen their capacity to play an effective role in democratic and economic processes. CIPE will continue supporting the Ethiopian private sector through its East Africa Regional Office in Addis Ababa in the coming years.

I would like to thank all the Amhara associations, coalition members, private entrepreneurs, and experts who contributed to the development of this RBA which will serve as a guiding light in the advocacy efforts of the Amhara business community.

I wish success to this initiative!

Hailemeleket Asfaw

Country Director, CIPE East Africa Regional Office

Executive Summary

The goal of a regional business agenda is to provide a common platform of priorities, solutions, and objectives for the business community of a region. This agenda identifies major business issues of marginal economic actors (MEAs) in the Amhara regional state, particularly those faced by women entrepreneurs, self-employed youth, micro-enterprises, and informal sector actors, and provides policy solutions and recommendations to address them. Ultimately, the regional business agenda identifies the business priorities of the MEAs that hinder their economic growth and empowerment.

The members of the Amhara business coalition, comprising business membership organizations (BMOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), have identified and agreed upon several priorities that can foster the development of businesses in the Amhara region, especially those owned by women, youth entrepreneurs, and informal entrepreneurs.

These priorities include the following:

- **Addressing the shortage of loans and challenges of credit access**
- **Alleviating the problem of ownership and lease of workspaces for business owners**
- **Reducing bureaucracy in the business registration process and the delivery of services to the business community**

The Amhara regional coalition and other local business community representatives identified these major issues and captured them in the business agenda. Besides identifying the constraints and issues that currently hinder the establishment and stability of local businesses, the coalition also formulated solutions and recommendations to address them.

Some of the recommendations forwarded by the coalition members and MEAs are to:

- Provide credit at a reasonable interest rate, revise the pay back-period, revise the estimation and valuation for local houses that are used as collateral, and design women friendly-credit products and services
- Regulate the land price by setting several price rates, adapted to the financial capacity of various economic actors, control illegal actors like land speculators and brokers, and provide a land lease for women-owned businesses at a reasonable lease price
- Reduce the time required to obtain the documents needed for business registration, establish a one-stop center for business registration and other services for the business community, decentralize decision-making within local administration offices, and train front-line public servants on gender and women's economic empowerment

More importantly, the Amhara regional coalition anticipates the potential impact of these priorities on the business environment considering the current situation of the MEAs.

Introduction

A business agenda is a tool for the business community to stimulate business activity and economic growth. It is also a process that allows the private sector to affect change by setting priorities and communicating them to policymakers.

Business agendas, which can be national, regional, local, sector-based, or multi-sector are tools that have been used by business associations and coalitions of associations in numerous countries around the world, including Malawi, Montenegro, Egypt, Romania, Nigeria, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova to set the policy priorities that should be revisited by decision-makers and expressed with one unified voice.

It is an important tool for both the business community and the government to have a structured dialogue on business issues that affect many companies. To facilitate this structured dialogue between policymakers and private sector representatives in the Amhara region, the CIPE East Africa Regional Office supported the development of this RBA, as part of the Empowering Marginal Economic Actors (EMEA) program. This RBA has been developed with active engagement and participation of a coalition of BMOs and CSOs which was established with CIPE support. The list of members of the Amhara business coalition is available in the Annex).

The coalition members and their partners, the marginal economic actors, participated in the data collection process and then in the validation of data. The coalition members also played a significant role in highlighting the issues faced by marginal economic actors, and formulating solutions for each of them. Finally, the coalition members are using the RBA in the public-private dialogue with concerned government offices for policy reform and the removal of barriers affecting marginal economic actors in the Amhara region.

Ownership over the Amhara Regional Business Agenda

The Amhara Regional Business Agenda is the product of research and consultations with all members of a coalition of business membership organizations (BMOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and women and youth organizations representing MEAs in the Amhara region.

The agenda is based on the input of 266 private entrepreneurs from both the formal and informal sectors who participated in a research study about the challenges faced by marginal economic actors in the Amhara region. Out of these, 164 of them are women and young entrepreneurs who own a registered business in either trade, construction, service, agriculture, or manufacturing sector; and the other 102 respondents are informal business owners. All these entrepreneurs answered a questionnaire that sought to identify the main challenges marginal economic actors in the Amhara region face in their daily business endeavours.

Additionally, key stakeholders from BMOs, and women and youth-owned businesses participated in five focus group discussions (FGD). Another 15 key informant interviews (KIs) were conducted with all regional organization leaders from BMOs, CSOs, and public offices such as the Micro and Small-Scale Enterprises Agency within the Amhara Regional State and Women, Child and Youth Affairs Bureau of the Amhara Regional State (WCYAB).

We have the pleasure to mention the following associations and chambers of commerce which are members of the Amhara regional coalition:

- Amhara Women Entrepreneurs' Association
- Amhara Region Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations
- Amhara Chamber of Sectoral Association
- Amhara Women's Association
- Amhara Women's Federation
- Amhara Youth Association
- Bahir Dar Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association
- Women Entrepreneurs' Association, Bahir Dar Branch

We would like to thank all individuals, associations, and public institutions, whose inputs were essential for the development of this regional business agenda. The consultants acknowledge all the private firms, institutions, and associations who took their valuable time to respond to the research questionnaire and participate in FGD and KIs.

The consultants extend their appreciation to all participants in both internal and external stakeholder validation workshops who have provided crucial feedback and validated the findings of the study that lie at the basis of the agenda.

Finally, our CIPE colleagues from the offices in Addis Ababa and Washington, D.C.) deserve our acknowledgement for the support granted throughout the development of this valuable regional initiative.

Economic Profile of the Amhara Region

The Amhara region lies in the northern part of Ethiopia. It has a surface of approximately 204,709 square kilometres and accounts for 15% of the total size of the country (ANRS, 2017; Head ANRS, 2017).

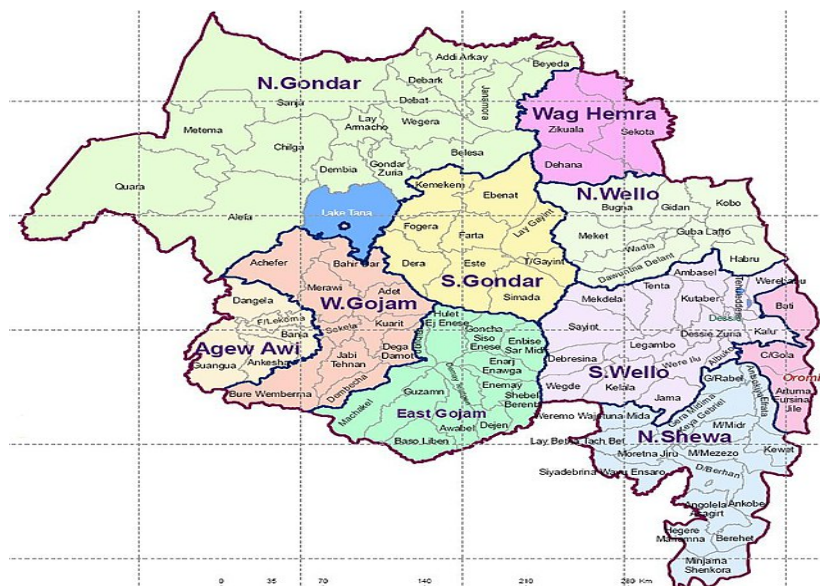


Figure 3.1: Administrative Map of Amhara Regional State

According to the population projection of Ethiopia for 2017 the state has a population of 21.13 million (CSA, 2013), out of which 10.58 million were men

and 10.54 million were women. Urban inhabitants represent 17.4% of the population.

The Amhara region provides huge untapped investment opportunities for both domestic as well as foreign investors. The region is the most fertile area in the country and produces major crops such as teff, barley, wheat, oilseeds, sorghum, maize, wheat, oats, beans, and peas in large quantities. In addition, cash crops such as cotton, sesame, sunflower, and sugarcane also grow in the vast and untouched tract of the region's lowlands. Furthermore, the region has about 450,000 hectares of irrigable arable land (ANRS, 2017) with an average landholding size per household of about 1.13 hectares (Abebe & Getnet, 2010). About 85% of the labor force of the state is engaged in agriculture.

Out of the 68,549 registered businesses that operate in seven major towns of the Amhara region, 67,704 (98.77% of the total) are small and micro enterprises. The remaining 845 (1.23%) are large and mid-sized businesses. Most of the businesses are sole proprietorships in terms of ownership, and small and micro businesses in terms of size. In addition, textile manufacturing, services, wholesale and retail trade are the sub-sectors that most small and micro businesses engage in (Amhara Region Trade and Industry Bureau, 2018).

Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agency (MSEDA) of the Amhara region has formulated a strategy in 2013 for SME development based on Proclamation No. 42/1999. The strategy is now under revision to accommodate the current context on the ground regarding small and medium enterprises. The revision of the recognizing the enormous importance that this sector represents in terms of employment and wealth creation and the production of a wide range of goods and services for the local population. The agency was later replaced by a Bureau of Labour and Training that was established in 2022 with new Proclamation No. 280/2022.

MSEs play a crucial role in the region's economy because they create jobs (self-employment and employment opportunities) while only needing a small

amount of capital to start operations. Furthermore, MSEs are critical in contributing taxes to the state budget. However, MSEs currently face severe constraints in their activities and development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and the recent conflict in northern regions of Ethiopia. MSEs are unable to address on their own the myriad challenges and constraints they face. These challenges are mainly related to the legal and regulatory environment, access to the market, access to finance, business information, business premises, the acquisition of skills and managerial expertise, access to appropriate technology, and in some cases, gender-based discrimination by civil servants and employees of financial institutions.

Priority Directions

Addressing the shortage of credit and inadequacy of credit access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Revise the collateral requirement to make credit more accessible to MSEs▪ Provide credit at a reasonable interest rate, no higher than 7 to 10% (the lowest rate acceptable according to the National Bank of Ethiopia, Interest Rate Directive Number NBE/INT/12/2017)▪ Extend the loan pay-back period to factor in the capacity of low-income economic actors▪ Incentivize MFIs and banks to open branches in remote areas to make their services accessible to entrepreneurs and to address the uneven distribution of bank branches across the region.▪ Enforce the National Bank directive on lending, SBB/52/2012) and ensure accountability and transparency to minimize corruption in the provision of loans▪ Revise the collateral estimation methodology to ensure the proper estimation and valuation of local houses that are used as collateral by businesses.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design women-friendly credit products and services ▪ Create information desks for women entrepreneurs within the main commercial banks
Alleviating the problem of ownership and rental of land and workspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulate the price of municipality-owned land by setting various prices for different clusters of SMEs. For example, the municipalities could introduce different prices for various clusters based on their significance and their contribution to employment creation, value addition, etc. ▪ Control illegal actors engaged in the land market i.e., land speculators and brokers in the land market ▪ The municipalities should incentivize the MSMEs that are members of a cluster and provide them with workspaces at a low price ▪ The municipalities should lease land to women-owned SMEs at a reasonable rate ▪ Encourage local investors to lease land in groups
Reducing bureaucracy in the business registration process and the delivery of services to the business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the time required to obtain documents for business registration ▪ Simplify the process of business registration ▪ Establish a one-stop center for business registration and other business-related services ▪ Decentralize decision-making within the Kebele administration and other government offices. This means that if the Kebele head is not in her/his office for any reasons, another employee should be empowered to make decisions on their behalf. This would expedite the time required to provide services to the business community. ▪ Appoint leaders of public institutions that understand women's role in the economy

	and give priority to women entrepreneurs in service provision. Train front line public servants on gender and the role of women in the economy to avoid discrimination against women.
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Priority Directions

Priority 1: Addressing the shortage of credit and inadequacy of credit access

Problem

The provision of credit is an important instrument to support SMEs in sustaining and expanding their operations. Credit is a critical input, especially when promoting micro-enterprises, self-employment, and income-generating activities among marginalized economic actors.

Credit is much more than just another input, it is a command over resources; an instrument that enables a person to obtain access to, or extend control over, resources. Credit has the potential to improve the bargaining power of marginalized economic actors in their dealings with other groups of the population. Therefore, access to credit is also considered an important factor in empowering marginalized economic actors to grow their businesses. This in turn can create more jobs, allow the payment of more taxes, and provide more goods and services that meet the needs of their customers.

However, in the Amhara Regional State, SMEs face many challenges related to access to credit that would allow them to operate and expand their business efficiently. At present, there are 16 commercial banks that operate in the region, but their lending products are not accessible to SMEs because of the stringent collateral requirements, which small businesses cannot meet. Moreover, there is only one major MFI that provides credit for SMEs in the region. The major challenges businesses are facing in terms of credit access and adequacy of credit available include the following:

- Loans are available at high-interest rates ranging from 18 to 23%
- Short pay-back period – it may range from 1 year to 3 years depending on the amount of borrowed money. Most of the time banks and MFIs will require businesses to repay the loan in a year to minimize risk, which puts pressure on small business owners
- Underestimation of collateral and valuation of the local houses at lower than market price by the banks and MFIs
- Non-accessibility of financial institutions/uneven distribution– the geographical distribution of MFIs around the region is uneven. The majority of bank and MFI branches are in big towns, which means that micro and small business owners must travel long distances to access financial services
- Complicated and time-consuming loan application processes. Banks and MFIs require many formal documents such as Kebele ID cards, business licenses, tax clearance letters from the revenue office, and a support letter from local authorities. If an SME borrower is married, he/she is required to provide a marriage certificate that may take up to two to three days to obtain. It can take up to a month or longer for SMEs to obtain and submit all the documents required to obtain the required loan
- Financial institutions also require entrepreneurs who apply for a loan to submit a three-year audited financial report and a business plan including a cash forecast
- The loan application review process is very long. It can take financial institutions more than six months to review the loan application, decide, and inform the applicant
- Lack of transparency and corruption in the lending process. There is no transparency in the lending process, and the loan approval criteria are not clear. Moreover, some bank administrators adopt corrupt practices. They request bribes to lend the required amount of money to those in need

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- Stringent collateral requirements - banks accept houses as collateral for loan applications from all types of customers, including women entrepreneurs. These requirements don't take women's position in the Ethiopian/Amhara region context into consideration. Nearly all women engaging in SMEs possess no collateral that could meet the requirements of banks and MFIs. In instances where a few women do own their houses, they are made of mud, which banks and MFIs are not willing to take on as collateral. Other assets such as land, cars, cattle, and gold jewellery are not accepted as collateral

Problems	Recommendations	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underestimation of collateral, valuing local houses at lower than market price by the banks and MFIs ▪ High-interest rates ranging from 18 to 23% ▪ Short pay-back period. Typically, banks require loan repayments annually ▪ Non-accessibility of financial institutions/ uneven geographic distribution. Most branches of the MFIs are in big towns, which makes it difficult for micro and small entrepreneurs based outside the major towns to access credit and other banking services needed for business growth ▪ Time-consuming loan application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise and relax collateral requirements ▪ Value local houses used as collateral by private entrepreneurs at market price ▪ Provide credit at a reasonable interest rate with a mechanism of profit sharing ▪ Provide loans at a more reasonable interest rate (no more than 7 to 10%) ▪ Revise and extend the pay-back period in consideration of the capacity of marginal economic actors ▪ Incentivize MFI and banks to open new branches in easily accessible locations and expand their operations across the region to make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing credit to SMEs will enable them to continue to operate and grow their business ▪ SMEs will take advantage of the reduced rate and use the funds saved from the difference in rate to expand their operations ▪ Extending the loan repayment period will put less pressure on SMEs and free funds for business investment and growth ▪ By encouraging MFIs and banks to have infrastructure at the doorsteps of SMEs, entrepreneurs will have easy access to financial institutions ▪ Financial institutions will grow their

<p>processes – MFIs require many documents to be provided by the SMEs to get the required loan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some bank administrators adopt corrupt practices (asking for bribes) to lend the required amount of money to those in need Stringent collateral requirements that women entrepreneurs cannot meet. The requirements do not take women's positions in the Ethiopian context into consideration 	<p>them accessible to businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify and streamline the loan application process. Develop transparent criteria for granting loans Implement anti-corruption policies in banks and MFIs Introduce a hotline where customers can report corrupt practices Design women-friendly credit products and services Create women desks at the banks and MFIs to assist women entrepreneurs in the loan application process 	<p>customer base, support economic development and wealth creation, and accomplish their mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This enables SMEs to use their time effectively and get the required money on time This provides equal opportunity for all SMEs to get the required credit promptly. The creation of women's desks at the banks will allow women to get support and simplify the loan application process for them. Women will become empowered and self-sufficient economically SMEs, mainly those that were created by a group of people, will be able to get easy credit access and share the responsibility of repayment
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Priority 2: Alleviating the problem of the land lease and ownership of workspaces

Problem

The process of getting municipality-owned land through a lease is a major challenge for businesses in the Amhara region. When municipality land was leased to some SMEs, it was based on financial statements to verify the turnover of the businesses. As the turnover of SMEs is considered less significant in comparison to that of large companies, their chances of receiving a plot of land or workspace are minimal. Larger businesses typically receive more land as they tend to earn more money that can be used to pay for the land lease. Land or workspaces were given to those that were legally registered, but at the same time, land ownership or lease is a requirement for business registration. The leasing of municipality-owned land tends to favor big businesses and the allocation of leased land does not follow a clear and transparent process.

To solve workspace problems, the municipalities of different cities/towns in the region provide sheds (small container houses) and office space in government-owned buildings for SMEs. However, these sheds are not easy to use due to the limited infrastructure, a lack of utilities (electricity and water), and roads, which result in most sheds being unused by businesses. These sheds are now closed or have been reallocated to other business owners illegally by either the municipality or the lessees of the sheds who obtained them from the municipality. The coalition members pointed out issues related to the misuse of sheds that were provided by the municipality to SMEs for free for a specific period. SMEs rent their sheds to others, some use the sheds outside of the ranges of their intended purpose or use only use part of the workspace. These have become common practices and the municipalities that lease the sheds do not follow up to verify how the space was used by the lessee.

Concerning access to sheds, some SMEs reported receiving immediate and timely responses from the municipalities while others received no response. Some other SMEs continued to use the sheds even after scaling up from small to medium-sized enterprises.

The information regarding the terms of the land lease bidding was not securely kept, and some people obtained information beforehand, which put other entrepreneurs at a disadvantage. All the sectorial associations were not equally treated as some got land timely whereas others were ignored.

In some cases, the sheds were used as storage space whereas others were rented to other businesses (sublease). The municipality has taken no measures against these practices.

Other SME owners obtained workspaces both as members of a group that the local government encouraged the establishment of and thus were provided preferential access to sheds individually. This means that some SME groups have more access than others to the limited workspaces that exist in the municipalities of the Amhara region.

The lease contracts between the municipalities and MSMEs are valid for five years. After five years, the municipality is required by law to verify whether the company has shown growth and expanded from micro to small and or small to medium-sized enterprise. If such a circumstance has occurred, the respective company is no longer eligible to lease land or workspaces from the municipality because it can now afford to lease land from private owners.

SMEs government offices need to strengthen monitoring of municipality-owned land or workspaces usage by companies to ensure that they are enforcing the law on land transfer. Additionally, they must ensure that the land and or workspace is used according to the law and that the land is being leased to businesses most in need that cannot afford to pay the market price. Moreover, many SMEs who obtained municipality-owned workspaces for the production of their goods did not have sales points. They had to wait for trade fairs and bazaars to market their products rather than sell throughout the year, which limited their growth.

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If SMEs don't have access to municipality-owned land, businesses can turn to privately owned land or workspaces. SMEs that lease land or workspace from owners of various shopping centers must pay high rental fees and incur high administrative costs, which makes them uncompetitive and limits their growth.

Problems	Recommendations	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor municipal land management system ▪ Unaffordable land lease prices for SMEs ▪ Lack of monitoring and verification of how municipality-owned land/workspaces are used by lessees ▪ Lack of clear and transparent criteria for municipality-owned land allocation, which leads to corrupt practices (including allocating leased workspace based on nepotism rather than clear and transparent criteria) ▪ In the municipalities, there is unregulated land price i.e., high lease prices and the brokers artificially increase the land price ▪ Lack of transparent land management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulate the land price by setting different prices for various categories of economic actors ▪ Control illegal actors (brokers) in the land market ▪ Government SMEs office in collaboration with municipalities need to incentivize SMEs to organize themselves in associations or clusters and provide them with workspace ▪ Develop and implement a monitoring and verification system to ensure the municipality-owned workspaces are used adequately ▪ Provide land lease for women-owned companies at a reasonable lease price ▪ Encourage local investors to lease land in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SMEs will have a stable workspace, which will boost entrepreneurs' and their employees' motivation levels ▪ In the long run, the stability of the workspace leads to cost savings for SMEs and the money they save will be used to expand operations and increase production/sales. This, in turn, will lead to SME growth. ▪ SME owners with adequate workspaces will be stimulated to formalize their businesses

Priority 3: Reducing bureaucracy in the business registration process and the delivery of offices for the business community

Problem

Documents such as entrepreneurs' kebele ID cards, support letters from the local administration, TIN numbers, and clearance from the revenue office are required to register a business or obtain a business certificate. Entrepreneurs sometimes have difficulties obtaining an ID card and they are asked to pay a bribe during the process.

These requirements (and the costs associated with them) discourage entrepreneurs from joining the formal economy and thus many entrepreneurs must default to informality. The bureaucracy that business owners in the Amhara region endure takes many forms including the following:

- A trade registration certificate takes four to six days to obtain and costs 82 ETB (about 1.5) USD
- A renewed trade license takes from five to seven days to obtain and costs 184 ETB (about 3.50 USD). If the renewal period expired, the business incurs a 20,000 ETB (about 370 USD) fine
- A tax identification number can be obtained in one to two days from the revenue bureau, but an identification card from a "Kebele" (Local Administration) for the business owner is a prerequisite. This is a challenge for entrepreneurs who migrate from rural to urban areas as many lack an ID card
- To renew a business license, SMEs are required to provide a recent receipt showing a lease payment, in instances where SMEs have leased their workspace
- Moreover, there is a negative attitude towards women in business by government employees in business registration offices. Traditionally, it's assumed that women are responsible for household management rather than engaging in business and therefore take longer to process their requests

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The above documents are also prerequisites for obtaining a loan from financial institutions. This means that the longer the process to obtain those documents, the less likely it is for marginal economic actors and MSMEs to secure credit.

Problem	Recommendations	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a one-stop center for business registration Decision-making is centralized within public institutions that serve the business community, which delays the provision of services for the business community. As a result of the high turnover of public institution leaders, entrepreneurs cannot have their requests solved. Thus, there is often a poor transfer of knowledge between leaders Low level of awareness about women's role in the economy among public servants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate unnecessary documents required for business registration Establish a one-stop center for business registration and liquidation issues Decentralize decision-making power within the kebele administration and other government offices Train the public servants working in public institutions that provide services to the business community Train front-line public servants that interact with the business community on gender and the role of women in the economy Introduce affirmative action for women entrepreneurs – an appropriate structure in the SMEs government office to support women entrepreneurs should be created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing bureaucracy can help SMEs run smoothly and efficiently Simplifying the business registration requirements will foster business formalization

Amhara Coalition Members

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