



FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE MELYT (*MUJERES, ECONOMÍA LOCAL Y TERRITORIOS*)

**A practical model for
women's economic
empowerment for dynamic
and sustainable territories
in the COVID-19 Recovery**



REGIONAL PROGRAMME

TECHNICAL PAPER

**FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
OF THE MELYT (*MUJERES, ECONOMÍA LOCAL Y TERRITORIOS*)**
A practical model for women's economic empowerment
for dynamic and sustainable territories in the COVID-19 Recovery

—
Author Bianca Pomeranzi
Coordination Rita Cassisi

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Quote UN Women (2021), *Framework for Women's Economic Empowerment of the MELYT (Mujeres, Economía Local y Territorios)*. A practical model for women's economic empowerment for dynamic and sustainable territories in the COVID-19 Recovery. Central America.

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Acronyms

CAMs	Centers of Attraction and services for MSMEs
EFE	Economic and Financial Ecosystem
TEE	Territorial Economic Ecosystem.
MSME	The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEA	Women's Entrepreneurial Associations

Executive Summary

This working paper provides a framework for women's economic empowerment, which draws on lessons learned, key strategic documents, and expertise generated by the implementation of the MELYT¹ Programme focusing on women, the local economy, and dynamic territories in the Trifinio area² of Central America.

The MELYT Programme was launched through an agreement between El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, UN Women's Regional Office in the Americas and the Caribbean, and the Italian Development Cooperation Agency (AICS) to provide technical and financial assistance for the economic empowerment of women. MELYT began in 2019, in the Northern Triangle of Central America: an area characterized by a multi-ethnic composition and an enormous availability of natural resources, which presents significant challenges in terms of rural poverty, hunger, climate change, political instability, violence, and rising migration trends to Mexico and North America. To respond to the challenges faced by these countries and mitigate migration, MELYT concentrated its actions in the Trifinio border region.

In this area, women undertake multiple roles; however, they lack access to and decision power regarding the access to credit and little to no control on the economic

assets.³ In order to advance women's economic empowerment, MELYT intervened, taking into consideration the complexities and the connections between the micro and macro components of the economic development processes and the gender inequalities which limit the access to business financial and digital services of women entrepreneurs in rural and remote areas.

The framework is based on the principles of women's economic empowerment. Autonomy is crucial for implementing the 2030 Agenda, and that the territorial dynamics are essential for understanding how to enhance the social and economic participation of women in development.

This framework could be applied by UN Women in the Latin American region and globally in its WEE programming considering the emerging needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.

It could also be a valuable tool for guiding programmes and interventions of public and private stakeholders and financial institutions interested in addressing the structural causes of gender inequality, implement the Santiago Commitment⁴ principles, and fostering policies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the short, medium and long term.

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- 1 MELYT builds upon the previous program's territorial approach, to address the challenges of increasing gender inequalities in the labor and production markets and increasing levels of violence against women. The intervention was decided on the basis of the "successful practice" for the economic participation of women in value chains and territorial development realized in the SICA region: the MyDEL Program.
 - 2 The Trifinio area is made up of 8 municipalities of the Santa Ana and Chalatenango Departments in El Salvador, 15 municipalities in the Departments of Jutiapa and Chiquimula in Guatemala and 22 municipalities in the Departments of Ocotepeque and Copán in Honduras) with a population of 818,911 inhabitants, of which 51.4% women living (70%) in rural and poor areas.
 - 3 See UN Women MELYT paper "LAS MUJERES EN LA REGIÓN DEL Trifinio DE CENTROAMÉRICA. CARACTERIZACIÓN TERRITORIAL". Informe final Agosto, 2020.
 - 4 The Santiago Commitment was adopted at the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020.

Introduction

Women's economic empowerment⁵ became a policy issue at the global level after the 2009 crisis and financial restructuring, as proven by the convening of a dedicated High-Level Panel by the UN Secretary-General⁶ and the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021.⁷ These policies and the human rights and intersectional approaches developed by women's movements intended to face the challenges posed to gender equality and women's empowerment⁸ by a rapidly changing economic scenario under the threat of financial, technological, and climatic pressures.

The experiences developed in the Latin American region, in particular, prove that for successful interventions to be transformative for women's economic empowerment and autonomy, they need to move beyond primary access to economic and human capital

and tackle the economic and financial constraints of women entrepreneurs in order to support inclusive growth and the wellbeing of communities.⁹

The new global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates social, economic, and infrastructural inequalities, particularly exposing women to economic marginalization and domestic violence. It could even lead to the emergence of new threats to equality between men and women. This crisis has been particularly damaging for women entrepreneurs since, worldwide, women tend to be poorer in terms of income, and they are the majority both in the informal economy and in the part-time work. In particular, it has exacerbated the gender inequality historically affecting women¹⁰ producing women's declining incomes, exit from the formal and informal labor market, and rising unpaid care work. The

- 5 Women's economic empowerment (WEE) has been defined the process of achieving women's equal access to and control over economic resources and ensuring they can use them to exert increased control over other areas of their lives (Taylor and Perezniato, 2014; OXFAM 2016).
- 6 UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, *Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment*.
- 7 UN Women and the UN Global Compact established the Women's Empowerment Principles that are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment. The WEPs offer concrete guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community through various policies, programmes and initiatives to accelerate gender equality.
- 8 UN Women 2018 TURNING PROMISES INTO ACTION: gender equality in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
- 9 According the CEPAL paper on "Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios" presented to the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, (Santiago 2020) and the principles agreed in the Santiago Commitment, women's autonomy is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development.
- 10 It is estimated that the pandemic is going to leave 118 million women and girls in poverty in the region. The economic downturn primarily affects the sectors (commerce, domestic work, manufacturing, tourism, administrative services, real estate, and the health sector) and the informal economy where women are over-represented (ECLAC/ILO, 2020, and unemployment projections). The increasing unpaid work of caring for the children and the elderly (ECLAC, 2020b) has limited the participation of women to the productive economy.

recovery cannot be based on old, failed approaches to women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the centrality of care, highlighting the unsustainability of current development models.

There will be new challenges in reorganizing productive and reproductive work beyond the current crisis in the medium term. Investment in social care, productive infrastructure, and creating an economy of services can boost local economies through direct job creation and improved family incomes, which generates returns to the economy and society. Women's economic empowerment and autonomy are more than ever central to the effective recovery of the COVID-19 crisis.

Therefore, a change in the prevailing development approaches is urgently needed.¹¹ The challenge of reorganizing productive and reproductive work in rural and marginalized areas is addressing inequalities and going beyond the present crisis. The increasing impacts of negative externalities (such as climate change, financial instability, social and political effects of migration) and the post-COVID-19 recovery require a new concept of "public goods" which complement regional public goods and national politics¹² (for instance, access to finance and credit, diffusion, transfer of technology and others) and new strategies to mitigate inequalities and to increase the effectiveness of regional and national policies.¹³

Then the recovery phase underscores the need for economic responses to COVID-19 to be financially inclusive

and gender-sensitive. Advancing women-owned and women-led businesses through specific products for safeguarding women's access to financial and digital services (DFS) is crucial for women's economic empowerment in these difficult times. Innovative programs and initiatives are instrumental in addressing these concerns and need to be analyzed with due attention.

The MELYT programme focuses on women's economic empowerment and establishing adequate business service centers and financial and digital platforms. It promotes innovative actions with Public Development Banks supporting the creation of valuable tools for informal and MSMEs entrepreneurs. The positive acceptance of these innovative actions and the finding that MELYT effectively reduced the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's productive activities in the Trifinio region¹⁴ are the origins of the framework based on its implementation.

The methodology that makes it possible to coherently propose the framework is based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected in the program's implementation¹⁵ and the knowledge of the processes activated for harmonizing the territorial economic development with the women's entrepreneurship enhancement. The analysis is based on the following criteria: increased participation of women in the economic activities; involvement of the main public and private stakeholders in business and financial development of MSMEs; establishment of adequate business and digital service platforms at territorial level.¹⁶

11 [UN Women Policy Brief n.16 - COVID-19 AND THE CARE ECONOMY: IMMEDIATE ACTION AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION FOR A GENDER-RESPONSIVE RECOVERY.](#)

12 See in ECLAC 2020 cited infra note 9 pag.196

13 [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean \(ECLAC\), Reconstruction and transformation with equality and sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean \(LC/SES.38/11\), Santiago, 2020.](#)

14 See: [UN Women MELYT paper "Iniciativas de Mujeres Frente al COVID, Experiencias de Resiliencia Región del Trifinio" December 2020](#)

15 See: [UN Women MELYT paper "Diagnóstico Territorial y Agenda de Emergencia COVID 19: GIRA TERRITORIAL " Marzo 2020](#)

16 See: [UN Women/MELYT Power Point - Enlaces Presentacion con Equipo MELYT por Alterna 12/8/2020.](#)

BOX 1. THE MELYT PROGRAMME

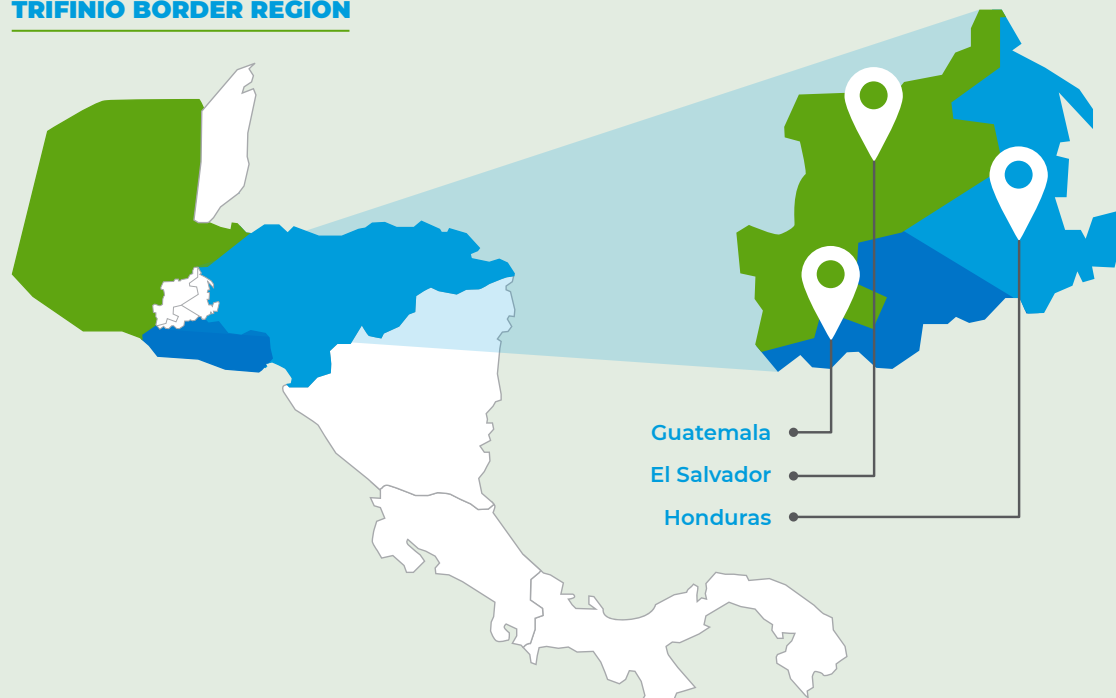
The MELYT strategy assumes that strengthening and promoting new models to support women’s entrepreneurship initiatives at the local level requires modifying how regional policies are designed and implemented through a bottom-up approach.

MELYT OPERATES AT THREE LEVELS:

- Local/departmental - in the selected communities of the Trifinio area, considering the entrepreneurial activities of women and their fundamental rights.
- National - in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, considering the gender equality and welfare policies and the policies to support MSMEs.
- Regional - sectorial policies for Gender Equality and Equity (PRIEG) and the policies for MSMEs of SICA (System of Integration of Central America).

MELYT developed a close collaboration with institutions of the regional integration system such as the Centre for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises (CENPROMYPE), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), the Trinational Commission of the Trifinio Plan (CTPT).

TRIFINIO BORDER REGION



SECTION 1

1. Main Findings and Lessons Learned from MELYT

MELYT can be considered an «innovative practice» of women’s financial inclusion. Its implementation has launched a process to overcome systemic social and economic discrimination against women through «a set of public and private initiatives aimed at responding to the needs of women that have traditionally been excluded from formal financial services».¹⁷

MELYT focuses mainly on leveraging strategic partnerships for financial inclusion and MSMEs policies:

- to identify problems that limit financial inclusion of women in the SICA region (financial instruments and services available, requirements and procedures, among others);
- to identify measures and actors to support financial digitization (Fintech);
- to build alliances among institutions, regulatory entities, intermediary and multilateral banks, governments, and civil society.

The First MELYT FINANCIAL FORUM directly involved the regional development Bank CABEI and the leading multilateral development and trade banks of the Region in the “financial inclusion and credit assistance strategy” implemented through:

- Building of partnerships between MELYT and national banks (as BANDESAL and Banco Hipotecario in El

Salvador, BANHPROVI in Honduras, and BANRURAL in Guatemala), and the institutions in charge of credit policies in the SIECA region (Central Bank and Development Banks) to promote schemes that guarantee measures for financial inclusion and diversification of products for women’s access to finance.

- The preparedness of the MELYT/CABEI fund. MELYT joined the Program of Support Facility for MSMEs (now part of the Emergency Support and Preparedness Program for the COVID-19) that brings together the countries’ efforts and other actors such as the EU and KFW, with a specific MELYT/CABEI FUND. Although the amount of the MELYT fund is relatively small compared to the amounts of the Facility Program to support MSMEs, it is important because 100% of its resources are intended to offer complementary guarantees to companies led by women. The design of the MELYT/CABEI fund has been carried out through meetings at the regional level between MELYT and CABEI to define the details of the

¹⁷ As ECLAC (2020) recognises “Historically, women have been excluded from the formal financial system and the strategies directed towards them have been mainly focused on microcredit programmes. In addition to granting small amounts, sometimes at high cost, microcredits have not been sufficient to cover the financing needs of productive activities and medium- and long-term investments of women in all their diversity”.

fund; meetings at the national level with National Banks and Local Financial Institutions to assess the feasibility; final meetings with Regional and National coordinators, National Banks, and local Financial Institutions to implement the financial facility and to submit applications.

The implementation of the financial inclusion strategy included specific FORUMS finalized to develop policies for promoting women's access to finance, gender responsible finance practices for women and other MSMEs entrepreneurs.

- 2019 and 2020 Forums on Financial Inclusion have demonstrated the growing interest of the Central American National and Development Banks in building substantive alliances to influence changes in the credit policies and improve customized financial products tailored to the women's needs. The 2020 Forum (December) focused on gender-oriented financial policies to recover the COVID-19 crisis. It involved directly regional and National institutions on gender equality (ECLAC, UN Women, SICA, Italian AICS) and private and public actors at all levels of the financial and credit system in the Latin American region (regional and national Development Banks). Many participants from the public and private sectors agreed on the need for specific financial policies to overcome the supply and demand barriers that women face and foster the implementation of new instruments to strengthen the impact of the recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The assessment, involvement, and enhancement of women's entrepreneurship associations and informal, productive activities at the territorial level have been accompanied by the growth of services for small and medium-sized enterprises in the territories through CAMs and the progressive adoption of gender sensitive

measures of national and regional institutions in the financial sector.

In the assessment stage, MELYT focused on the generation of knowledge on the territorial areas of intervention and the program's main partners. It started with selecting the areas of intervention based on the following criteria:

- the presence of innovative public subjects
- the commitment to development processes that involve women
- Centers of attraction for business and financial assistance to women's local entrepreneurship

These criteria led to the identification of the Tri-national Commission of the Trifinio Plan (CTPT) of the Northern Triangle of Central America as the regional partner institution. MELYT activated a partnership with the CTPT to identify a set of local actors focusing, in the short term, on women's participation in local production chains for natural and cultural heritage products and, in the medium term, to the economic empowerment of rural women to reduce migration trends by facilitating the revitalization of the fabric of the resident population.

The assessment phase was designed to generate knowledge on the territorial areas of intervention and the selection of key stakeholders to assist MSMEs other regional and national institutions working in gender equality.

The leading partner in this phase was RIMISP, an autonomous and independent organization for research, advocacy, and capacity building that works on rural and local development in Latin America.¹⁸ RIMISP realized an in-depth assessment on the typology of actors and the role they were expected to play in the territorial ecosystems; the agreements for the strategic partnerships to

¹⁸ See RIMISP [here](#). RIMISP was recruited in order to: design common tools that could guarantee the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the program; support the strategy making through the information analysis on drivers, enablers and barriers to be overcome and the production of knowledge

be signed by MELYT with Regional Actors (Plan Trifinio, CENPROMYPE, SIECA, CABEI), National Actors (the three national governing bodies of MSMEs, the three national gender machineries and the three national banks) in the priority regions of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.¹⁹ At the territorial level, the assessment was anchored to the presence of CAMs (Centers for Assistance to MSMEs) as central actors of local economic dynamics.

This analysis allowed to select six CAMs (MSME Service Centers): UNICAES Santa Ana, El Salvador; CAYAGUANCA Chalatenango, El Salvador; CUNORI Chiquimula, Guatemala; CDE MIPYME Región Occidente, Honduras; CDE MIPYME Región Lempa, Honduras; CDE MIPYME Region Golfo, Honduras.

BOX 2. THE CAMs



management and knowledge exchange systems.

¹⁹ In particular it was analysed the support provided to the network of MSMEs Service Centers, public-private instances of services affiliated to CENPROMYPE (called PROMIPYME in Guatemala, CDMYPE in El Salvador and CDEMIPYME in Honduras).

The focus on the economic and social gender dynamics at the local level, developed by local and regional Academic networks and study centers, has enabled the participation of women's entrepreneurial associations and individual entrepreneurs at all levels of the intervention.

MELYT has promoted synergies on gender equality at territorial, national, and regional levels in two ways: directly at the territorial level and indirectly through the strengthening of the national gender machineries. While MELYT performs a direct role in the strategic partnerships with regional and national institutions for financial inclusion and business assistance to women's entrepreneurship, it indirectly supports initiatives on gender equality through synergy with other institutions and international and national actors (e.g., the alliances with COMMCA; UN Women and other international and national stakeholders in the fight against GBVAW and for Women's Rights).

This distinction between direct and indirect execution was eliminated to avoid the risk of dispersion or duplication by recognizing and reinforcing the initiatives already underway.

To identify and support the role of women's entrepreneurial associations, RIMISP promoted a strategic alliance between MELYT and the network of universities in the Trifinio Universities (UNICAES in El Salvador, CUNORI in Guatemala, and CUROC in Honduras) and RIMISP took the responsibility to deliver a diagnosis of the conditions that facilitate or hinder the participation of women in territorial dynamics in the Trifinio region on a broad set of dimensions. The University

teams began working in alliance with CAMs, local public and private actors, and women entrepreneurs to promote the knowledge accumulation and to monitor the impact of MELYT on WEE, and to support National and Regional Machineries for gender equality to collect data on the process of the implementation of International and Regional Plans and Agreement for Gender Equality.

In the MELYT programme, the digitalization of financial and trade services (Fintech) has been considered a tool to support women's entrepreneurship and social progress in the selected territorial areas of intervention.

The technical assistance to CAMs was organized according to the territorial approach for dynamic territories. Specific technical assistance on ICT and market was carried out by the private service provider and digital platform Alterna with its program ENLACES. This program links the territorial market activities to Anchor Companies in the value chains.²⁰ Quality services provided to the six CAMS were: women's training and business assistance; access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and FinTech. Alterna achievements to date have been:

- A successful campaign resulted in 200 applications from anchor companies (vs. 120 expected) and reached more than 1.7 million people (300 thousand from Trifinio).
- Twentyone companies anchored from the three countries finished the cultivation process (vs. 18 expected) and received follow-up from Alterna.

²⁰ The methodology of the Alterna is conceived as "a platform for social evolution that works so that people, companies and organizations can develop new ways to change their reality, using specific routes such as entrepreneurship and business". Its services consist of an entrepreneurship program, conceived as a route designed so that entrepreneurs and companies can take their social or environmental impact business to the next level. It is proposed that this route is an open route so that a diversity of businesses at different stages and levels can be prepared according to their needs and receive financing.

- A complete digital adaptation of all three Alterna methodologies (anchor, entrepreneurs, and CAMs) to work in the current context and prepare companies for the challenges of the crisis.
- Four hundred female entrepreneurs from Guatemala and El Salvador trained through the Alterna methodology, focusing on critical business needs in a COVID context.
- The CAMs have made significant progress in the process and are working hand in hand with Alterna to strengthen local women entrepreneurs.

The MELYT case offers the chance to implement the criteria of the Santiago Commitment on the promotion of a gender-responsive approach to digital finance through the assessment of gender differential opportunities, vulnerabilities, and risks in the territorial ecosystem involving all the stakeholders for assessing and identifying opportunities, risk and adequate risk mitigation actions of the digital finance services and policies that can impact the lives of the women and their communities.

The MELYT programme, recognizing the leading role of women in productive activities and organizational practices of community care, strengthened the acknowledgment of women's contribution as workers and community caregivers and developed new forms of territorial services.

The support to institutions for gender equality and women's networks and associations promoted a direct

involvement of MELYT in the concrete experiences of women (in the form of individual or associative entrepreneurship) and the networking initiatives of women's organizations with the support of FUNDE.²¹

The immediate outputs were:

- The institutionalization of the HOSAGUA TRINATIONAL NETWORK as the official partner of the program.
- The HOSAGUA NETWORK is a confederation of local networks supported by the national mechanisms for women (ISDEMU, INAM, and SEPREM) formed by 61 organizations with a total of 3,865 members (female entrepreneurs, businesswomen, members of the municipal councils, the women's offices of the mayors, professionals, and environmental activists).
- The HOSAGUA Network during the coronavirus crisis developed specific care initiatives and, as a result of the participation of its national representatives to the Trifinio MASTER PLAN board, the support to building or renovation of territorial Care Centres is now part of the planned initiatives.
- MELYT promoted multisectoral alliances for the economic empowerment of women, and a relevant result of this collaboration has been the "National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women" of UN WomenGuatemala that proposes a "plan of actions" to develop the potential of women within the national investments in sustainable economy and the increase in exports, tourism, and investments for MSMEs.

²¹ The National Foundation for Development (FUNDE) is an institution for research, formulation of socioeconomic policies, lobbying and promotion of development, with the most disadvantaged sectors of the population as its main target.

BOX 3. MELYT AND COVID-19

It should be emphasized that the implementation phase of MELYT, despite the mobility restrictions imposed by the hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency due to the Iota Hurricane crisis, did not stop, but on the contrary, intensified its activities.²²

The Women's Networks have been central to expand the MELYT activities at a territorial level to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 crisis through the support to women's economic activities and territorial Care Centres. During the pandemic, women's community care initiatives revisited the previous practices of community networks of the popular sectors, generating spaces for collective bargaining and substantive ways of social protection.

That was due to progressive knowledge production on the territorial social and economic contexts and the methodology of building networks connecting different stakeholders in a multi-level perspective.

The established networks made it possible to promote connections and keep operational contacts through the digital scale during the COVID-19 pandemic between the territorial areas, the women's associations working in their communities, and the national and regional institutions.

This approach allowed a quick response to the socio-economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the MELYT management rapidly re-oriented available QIPs funds to address the urgent needs of the women's associations and communities.

²² See infra note 14.

SECTION 2

2. A Theoretical Strategic and Operational Framework for WEE

2.1 Rationale

This section of the paper aims to illustrate a theoretical, strategic, and operational framework that potentially ensures the support and promotion of women's economic empowerment, particularly for women of remote and rural areas. It proposes a conceptual map based on the relationships between gender and territory, the economy, empowerment, and sustainable development.

The framework illustrates the guiding principles and key concepts used in the MELYT experience to promote initiatives on WEE aligned with the UN Women strategy for implementing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

It focuses on enhancing women's entrepreneurship by establishing adequate territorial services platforms and macro and mid-level strategies for financial and digital inclusion.

Granting the urgency of new approaches and actions to counter the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed framework aims at implementing the recently approved principles of the Santiago Commitment (2020),²³ in particular focusing on key priorities as:

- close the gender gaps in the access to finance through financial inclusion and a fair and informed financial education of women.
- promote digital inclusion of women.

- promote investments in the care economy and provide financial facilities and assets for women's MSMEs considering creating networks between governments, the private sector, and civil society.

2.2 The five pillars of the approach

Before entering into the framework description, it is essential to highlight the main pillars of the general approach. These pillars are the analytical-operative axes that make it possible to propose the process coherently and share the knowledge obtained in the MELYT case around enhancing women entrepreneurship and establishing territorial platforms and financial inclusion services.

These five pillars sustain the structure of and interact with the theoretical, strategic, and operational framework.

PILLAR 1. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN A TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVE

The process of enhancing women's economic empowerment is enabled or constrained by crucial factors directly affecting women on an individual and collective level ranging from human rights, unpaid care and work burdens to collective action and leadership, social protection, education and training, access to property, assets and business assistance and financial services,

²³ The Santiago commitment is particularly important for its focus on the inter-sectional differences among women (indigenous women, Afro-descendants, women at the base of the social pyramid) and for the references to: financial inclusion (paras 20,22); digital innovation (paras 21,23); network building (para 31).

among others. From a territorial perspective, WEE concerns both gender equality in the formal institutions and the productive and reproductive structure of the economy and how each territory organizes the agency and the economic participation of women and men. In this perspective, to transform situations of gender inequality and to enhance WEE are required actions at the national level and in territorial dynamics.

PILLAR 2. THE ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

The “ecosystem”²⁴ metaphor can help represent economic networks and analyze the sources of regional and territorial advantage, the role of entrepreneurs, and the determinants of the resilience of the economic systems. The ecosystem analysis is a tool for understanding the interactions between different stakeholders: economic agents, service providers, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, legislators, investors, bilateral and multilateral cooperation entities, academics, producers, and leading market companies, among others. An ecosystem analysis for WEE includes the complex transformation of territorial dynamics and the changes in the production patterns and the welfare system by focussing on the connections between the market and women’s productive and reproductive work and care responsibilities.

PILLAR 3. THE PARTNERSHIP NETWORKS

The development of partnerships networks and strategic alliances are critical to integrating policies to promote women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship with specific actions to support the economic and productive environment at the

territorial level. Building partnerships with the networks of key economic and financial stakeholders and private and public territorial stakeholders can leverage changes for promoting women’s competencies and entrepreneurial capacities.

PILLAR 4. THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Financial inclusion should not only increase women’s access to affordable and appropriate financial services but also adapt and create business development services, market strategies, and financial information so that they are appropriate to women entrepreneurs of formal and informal economic activities in all productive sectors and inclusive for rural, indigenous, and afro-descendant women. Interventions that combine finance (especially grants) and business assistance effectively support women’s business start-up more than financial services alone. This combination helps to improve women’s entrepreneurship in contexts where territorial development of MSMEs is affected by lack of business and financial assistance, poor market infrastructures, and ICT and digital services.

PILLAR 5. THE WOMEN’S NETWORK MOBILIZATION

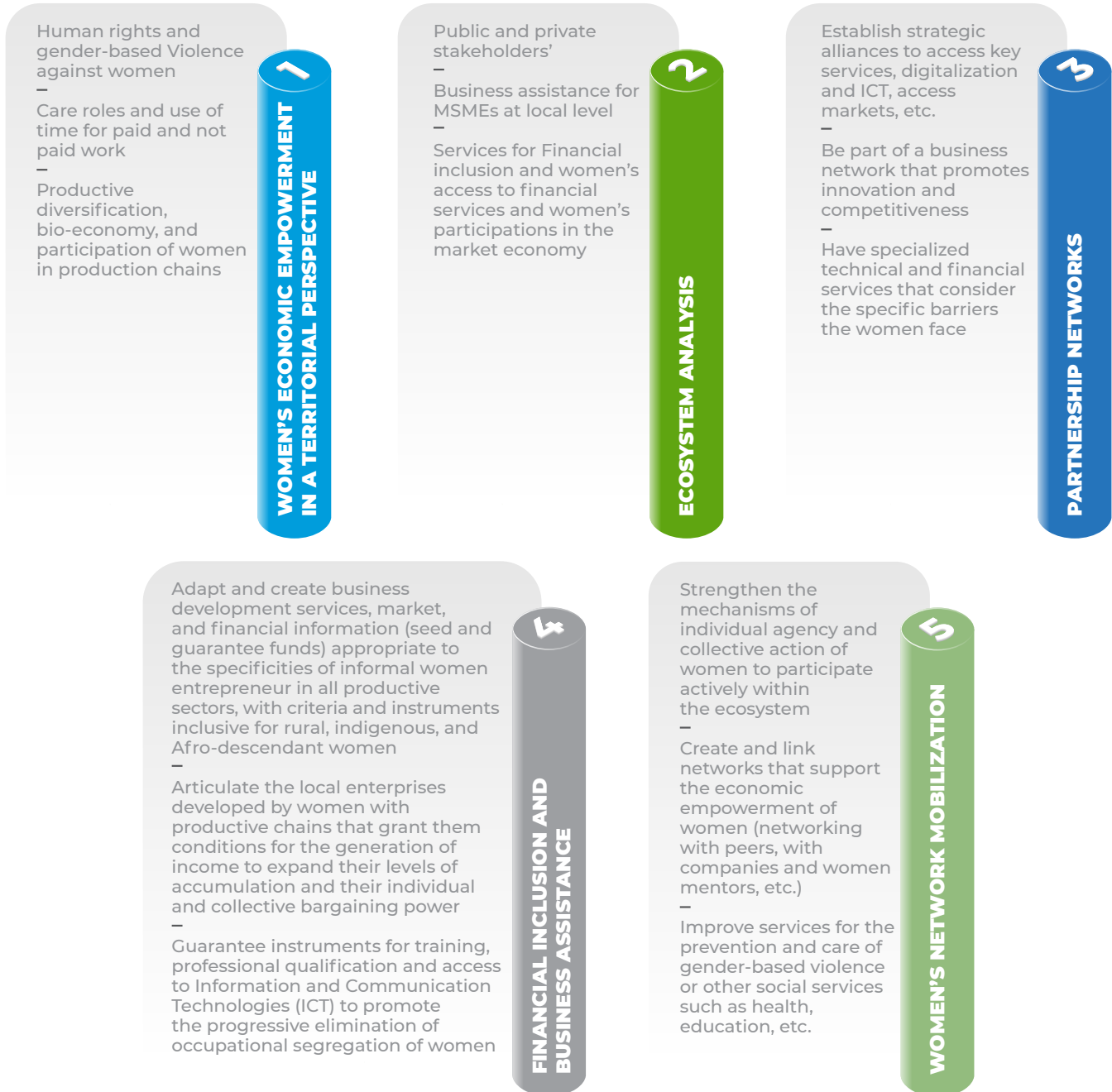
WEE requires a holistic approach, which focuses on the structural barriers that women face in the economy and society and it requires working at many levels simultaneously. Achieving WEE is part of a process of empowerment along with economic, political, and social entry points, based on the understanding of the social and political dimensions of the organization and

²⁴ An “ecosystem” is defined as a dynamically stable network of interconnected agents and institutions within a bounded geographical space. A specific Financial and economic Eco-system includes providers (technical or capacity building), financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, legislators, investors, bilateral and multilateral cooperation entities, foundations, investors, academics, producers and leading companies, competitors, among others. Their common denominator is that they interact within a network to maximize the development and impact of MSMEs.

the collective voice of women. An agenda that focuses on women’s network mobilization is essential to promote a potential impact and a systemic change on the economic ecosystem. The support to women’s network

mobilizations requires identifying economic entry points alongside political and institutional entry points and promoting linkages with other gender equality initiatives and programs.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF MELYT



SECTION 3

3. The Framework

3.1 The Theoretical Framework

MELYT's challenge consists mainly of translating the global agenda of sustainable development to the local level, focusing on women's economic empowerment and autonomy in a territorial dimension.

The Programme's main objective is to increase women's access to productive resources by creating and strengthening regional and national policies and strategies for financial inclusion and the improvement of financial and business service centers for MSMEs at the local level.

The MELYT theory of change states that: (1) if Public policies and programs at the SICA regional level are enhanced to increase women's access to productive resources and (2) if women use products and services for female entrepreneurship to increase their economic opportunities; then (3) women's living conditions will improve because (4) they will gain access to sustainable livelihoods.

The theoretical framework focuses on how the growing financial developments of the economy and territorial dynamics interact with women's entrepreneurship in recent decades, global economic trends and digital innovations have been interacting with local dynamics in

an interdependent way impacting the current development context. The financial sector (banking, insurance, real estate) has expanded globally, and it has increased in complexity, concentration, and interconnectivity. This has resulted in growing interdependence between countries and different places inside each country.

Historically, women have been excluded from the formal financial system. The strategies directed towards them have been mainly focused on microcredit programs that have not been sufficient to cover the financing needs of productive activities and medium- and long-term investments of women. Thus, for enhancing WEE in rural and remote areas, policies of financial inclusion and access to quality entrepreneurial services at the territorial level are needed²⁵ to contribute to women's economic autonomy.

The underlying logic is that financial inclusion and territorial dynamics determine the possibilities of women's economic empowerment. However, to be effective and transformative, a framework for WEE should recognize the centrality of women's entrepreneurship and the agency of women's networks, at all levels of its intervention, with a particular focus at the local level where they exercise a remarkable impact on women's business start-up and early warning for situations of hardship and crisis.

²⁵ ECLAC (ECLAC 20) defines "Financial inclusion as a set of public and private initiatives aimed at responding to the financing needs of individuals, households, small and medium-sized enterprises that have traditionally been excluded from formal financial services. Financial inclusion involves providing an affordable choice of financial services and products".



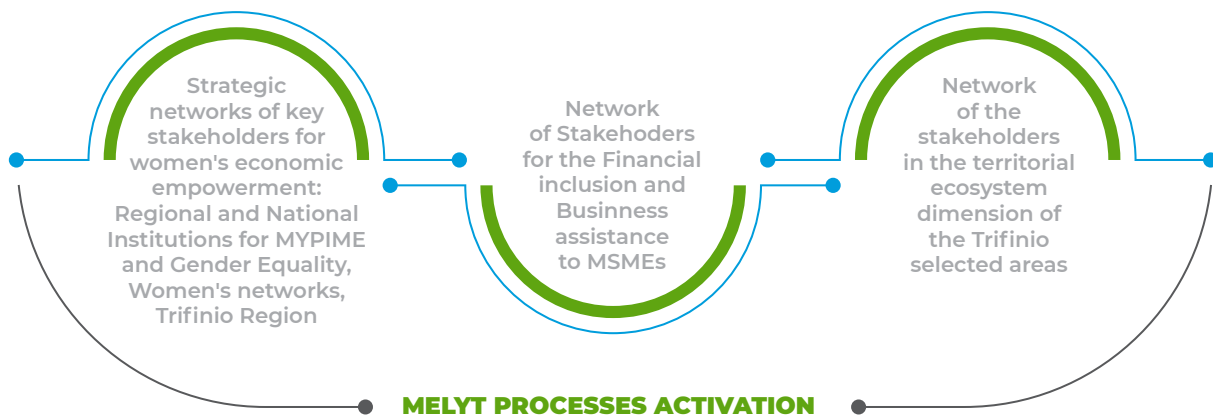
3.2 The Implementation Strategy

The strategy is based on a comprehensive approach, both *multidimensional*: to consider the economic, social, and cultural dimensions that can influence the participation of women in the economic activities and *multi-level*: to consider discrimination against women and support women’s financial autonomy at different institutional and territorial levels. This comprehensive approach, rooted in the previous experiences of territorial development and women’s empowerment,²⁶ has been translated into the new development scenario, where technological and economic changes have transformed actual places and physical spatiality - that is the

previous “local”- in terms of constraints and opportunities to “access” to circuits and networks of economic, social, and institutional relationships.

This is why the strategy should utilize the “ecosystem” metaphor to define the networks to which women must have access to in order to realize their economic empowerment. These ecosystems are the Economic and Financial Ecosystem (EFE) which includes all the agents and activities at the macro and mid-level of the economic and financial system in the MSMEs development and the Territorial Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (TEE), which includes the networks of agents and activities of the economic systems at territorial level.

THE NETWORK METHODOLOGY



²⁶ See MYDEL infra note 1

The strategy **should promote a multi-level network of partnerships and alliances** in the main sectors of Business Assistance (National and regional public and private institutions for the economic development of MYPME) and Financial Inclusion (National and regional development banks and credit institutions at a different level) and support women's entrepreneurs and advocacy associations working for innovative policies for WEE.

These partnerships and alliances aim to integrate new approaches and proposals for women's economic

empowerment as part of the long-term financial institutions' agendas and build an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship through territorial business services and trans-territorial value chains.

The strategy must balance actions directed to mainstream financial and business stakeholders and territorial stakeholders. These actions should respond to the specific needs of women and pay particular attention not to isolate them from the web of economic and social interactions.

THE STRATEGIC PATH TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP SHOULD:

- Encourage public institutions to support, promote and bring to scale enhanced access to and growing use of financial services for women and their businesses.
- Encourage banks to step up cater their products and services to the needs of women.
- Promote new forms of digital finance for women, for both the financially excluded and the already financially included but underserved.
- The strategic path to improve economic, territorial dynamics should promote:
 - The establishment of alliances between institutions, the private sector, and civil society, aimed at introducing innovative processes and resources for business initiatives of female entrepreneurs at the local level.
 - The support to technical assistance centers and financial and digital services providers for the empowerment of local entrepreneurs.
 - The recognition of women entrepreneurship as active stakeholders in the innovation economy.

THE GENERAL STRATEGY (VEDI TRAD ALL 1)



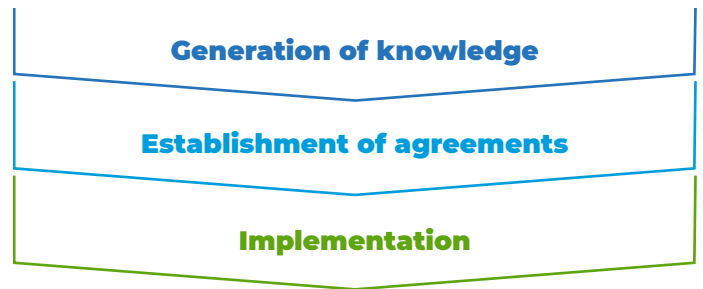
3.3 The Operational Framework

The Operational Framework effectiveness requires the commitment at the highest level of regional and national institutions and a specific “Programme Management Unit” for guiding the process of identification and progressive involvement of all the main stakeholders. The process starts with selecting the territorial areas of intervention and identifying the main partners at the national and regional levels.

3.3.1 The Knowledge Generation Processes

To manage the complex definition of the women’s entrepreneurial networks, the territorial economic networks,

and the business assistance and financial inclusion ecosystems, the programme management unit should be supported by knowledge generation on the territorial areas of the intervention.



This analysis should guide the selection of the areas of intervention and the main partners of the program.

STEP 1. SELECTION OF THE TERRITORIAL AREAS

The selection of the territorial areas of the intervention should be based on the following criteria:

Administrative Institutions’ (Regional, National, and Local) capacities to promote innovative development processes that involve women and their communities and support policies for the transformation of remoteness-isolation into assets to be valued.

Presence of Centres of Attraction for MSMEs - or Service Center, according to their capacity to offer services (business and financial assistance).

Presence of women’s associations and entrepreneurial activities.

In the MELYT case, it has been essential that an innovative stakeholder (Region Trifinio) played a catalytic role between different institutional levels (national and regional). Other «innovative stakeholders» can have various features, but in any case, they must be able to exercise a guiding social and economic function for mid-level areas to create a critical mass of the local experiences involved.

STEP 2. SELECTION OF THE MAIN PARTNERS

The following criteria should guide the selection of the leading partners:

Regional and National governing bodies for MSMEs and banking system	To improve regional and national public policy instruments with approaches to territorial development and female entrepreneurship that reduce institutional barriers and access to resources for female business development.
Financial and credit institutions sensitive to addressing the issue of women's inclusion	To increase and re-orient funding to facilitate the initiatives for women's economic empowerment (in the recovery of the COVID-19 crisis, these institutions should be involved from the very beginning of the program as part of a network building with other actors of the territorial dynamics).
Local and regional Academic networks and women's networks	To provide the grounding of the framework through a process of knowledge production at the territorial level to allow the participation of women entrepreneur in the economic and social territorial dynamics.

THE PARTNERS' SELECTION SHOULD BE BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT OF THEIR ROLE AND FUNCTION WITHIN THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ECOSYSTEMS, AS FOLLOWS:

STEP 3. ROLE OF ACTORS IN THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Type of Actor	Functions in the Economic and Financial Ecosystem for MSME
Regional Economic Institutions	Institutions that Macro Economic System at Regional Level and that, due to their mandate, are related to support to MSMEs
Central Governments	Institutions or entities that depend on the Executive Power at the central or departmental level and whose mandate is related to MSMEs, or policies for economic development and gender equality, for example, the ministries or secretariats of the economy or social development or machineries for gender equality, the commissions, or governing bodies for the promotion of the MSME sector, as well as its central units at the subnational level and the programs and initiatives they promote.
Local Governments	This category includes local governments (municipalities) or associations in the area of intervention of the program and their specialized - operational units, which lead or support local economic development initiatives, promotion of MSMEs, and women's empowerment.

Business Development Centres	The programme should support business development centers at the local level managed by the national governing bodies or private partnerships.
Technical and Business Service Providers	Institutions that provide technical, advisory, or training services for business development. This category includes services provided directly to women entrepreneurs by Business Development Centres or other private entities: specific technical assistance services and digital services, training services, and training.
Financial Institutions Financial Service Providers	International, regional, or national first and second-tier financial institutions and national or regional banking, savings, and credit entities. They should establish alliances with the program or with which business development centers are linked to enable and improve access to adequate financial products by the segment of women who constitute the programme 's target group.
International Cooperation	These are international cooperation initiatives granted by multilateral or bilateral entities to national governments on issues related or complementary to the program's objectives. This includes all kinds of programs, projects, financing mechanisms operated by ecosystem actors at the national, regional, or local level.
Private Sector	All companies (including small, medium, and large, national, or international) operate in the area of influence of the program. These alliances can be established for training, exchanging experiences, and good practices or establishment are considered in this category of commercial relations.
Civil Society Organizations (Network, Associations, Foundations, and Others)	Civil society organizations, women's networks, and others that support training, participation, and women's rights; those that can offer complementary services to those provided by business development centers, particularly those related to care and prevention of gender-based violence; as well as one whose objective is to promote the collective action of women for the realization of their economic empowerment.
Academia Study Centres	It refers to institutions present in the selected territories, nationally or internationally, dedicated to the generation of knowledge, training, and teaching, with specialization in issues related to territorial development, local economic development, the development of MSMEs, and the economic empowerment of women.

3.3.2 The Establishment of Partnerships and Agreements

The establishment of partnerships with high level regional, national, and local institutions and authorities should be organized according to their direct or indirect role in the interventions financed by the programme, divided in:

- Direct Partnerships with the Institutional leaders, Financial and economic stakeholders of the EFE, and the Centres of Attention of the TEE.

- Agreements on indirect support to initiatives promoted by other Institutions and development stakeholders for gender equality initiatives and women's human rights to articulate the development of women's entrepreneurship with gender equality and democratic governance.

3.3.3 The support to the CAMs

To have a more significant impact on women's economic empowerment, particularly in rural and remote areas, one of the main challenges is to reach economic development

actors at the territorial level breaking the top-down logic defined from the center and focusing on the support to business assistance and financial inclusion services offered by the Centers of Attention for MSMEs (CAMs).

The actions should be based on examining the potential, the dimensions, and the specific needs of the Centers of

Services already active in the selected areas. The diagnosis should focus on the operational structures, the quality of financial and business services offered to women, their interaction with other key actors of the market system that play a crucial role in the development of MSMEs with a particular emphasis on developing women's entrepreneurship.

ANALYSIS OF SERVICE CENTRES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Dimensions	Description
Organizational capabilities	<p>General policies and strategies of the actors to promote MSMEs. The analysis will focus mainly on the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic orientation; • Operational structure; • Portfolio feature; • customer acquisition and retention. • Mobilization of resources and sustainability; • Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Management
Female Entrepreneurship	<p>Policies, strategies, and instruments (technical and impact measurement) of regional, national, and territorial actors promote the economic autonomy and entrepreneurship of women. Characteristics, conditions, interest rates, and terms of the financial services and products available to women's client portfolio.</p>
Financial Services	<p>Characteristics, conditions, interest rates, terms of the financial services, and products available to the CAMs client portfolio. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of the institution's products and services (e.g., revolving funds, seed capital, microcredit funds) • Availability of financial services and products through banks, microfinance institutions, cooperatives, savings and credit banks, and other intermediaries.
Territorial market opportunities	<p>Explore the link and participation of business development centers to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market opportunities: local, regional, national value chains; short chains, social and solidarity economy initiatives • Innovation processes • Positioning and promotion of the territory • Spaces for territorial planning
Articulation of key actors of the territorial ecosystem	<p>Analyze the relationships between ecosystem actors to understand the current status of these relationships and identify which ones should be established or strengthened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and technical service providers; • Public and private actors • Government Actors • Civil society • Academy and thought centres • Cooperation stakeholders • Customers • Competitors

The support to CAMs should be tailored on the needs assessment and should focus on the following areas:

- Technical support to women’s training and business assistance;
- Access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Fintech.
- Market strategy to link the territorial market activities to «Anchor Companies» in the value chains.

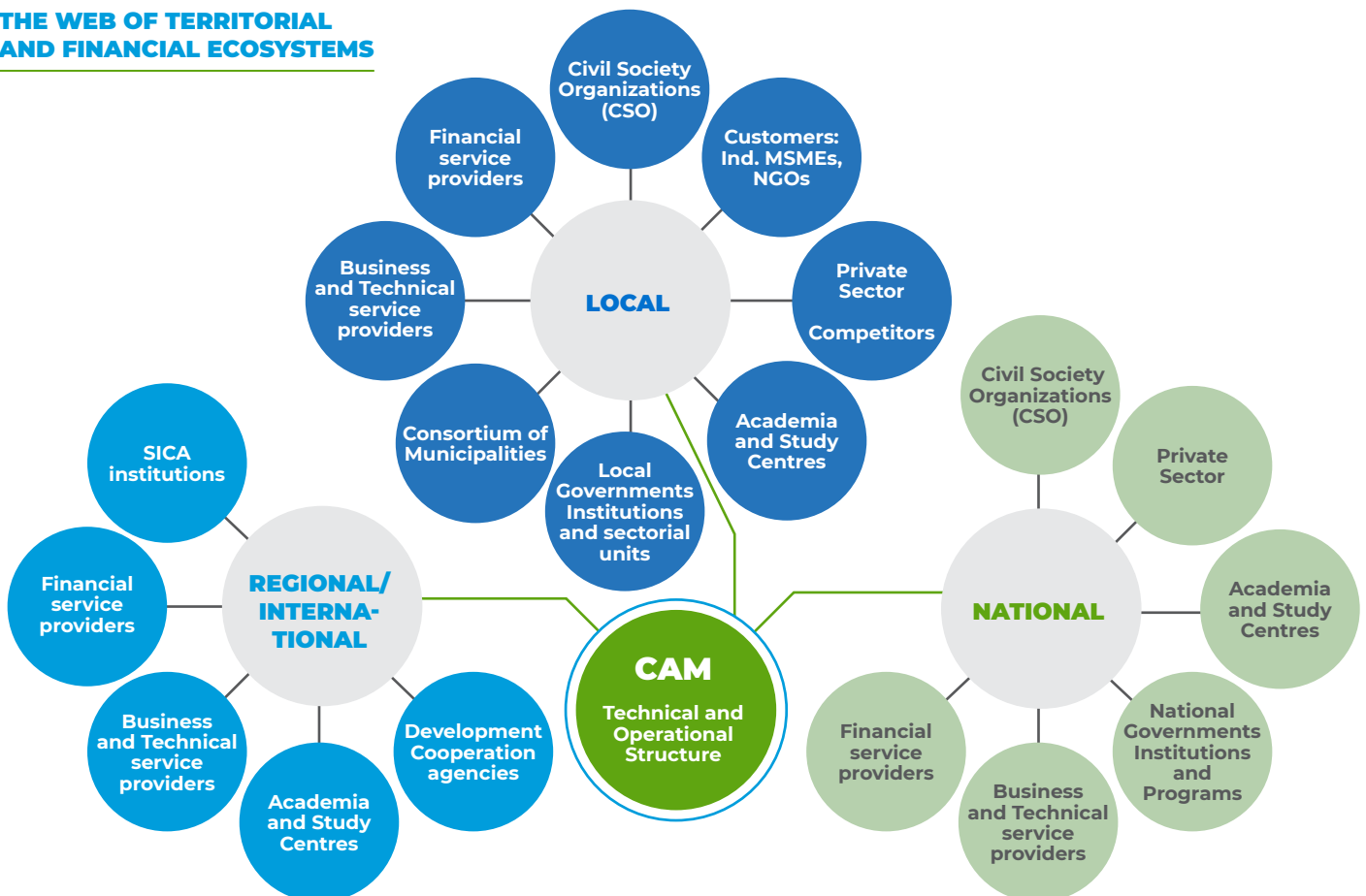
Private service providers and managers of digital platforms are critical to support the development of new entrepreneurship programs so that territorial entrepreneurs and companies can diversify their businesses through ICT and further business assistance and digital services.

Private service providers should be selected according to their management and sectorial abilities to:

- Articulate the enterprises developed by women with productive chains that grant them conditions for the generation and appropriation of added value to allow them to expand their levels of accumulation and their individual and collective bargaining power.
- Guarantee instruments for training and qualification for women’s entrepreneurial activities facilitating the equitable and competitive insertion of women into stable employment and productive market initiatives
- Facilitate access to digital services Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the use of Fintech

The final result of the assessment can define the interactions between all the stakeholders of the economic, financial and territorial, and sectorial ecosystems in an operational framework.

THE WEB OF TERRITORIAL AND FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEMS



3.3.4 Financial and Digital Inclusion

Financial and credit institutions' sensitiveness to the issue of women's inclusion and to increase or re-orient funding to facilitate women's economic empowerment has expanded in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Main financial stakeholders have recently agreed in Paris²⁷ (Paris Global Summit of Development Banks) to advance towards the development of a diversified set of financial instruments and affordable financial services that are non-discriminatory and offer equal access to women to savings and credit while taking into account the advantages afforded by the new digital era.

The financial and digital inclusion activities should aim to:

- Promote financial systems that contemplate the access and use by women, particularly disadvantaged women, of diversified savings and credit products and services, including insurance products.
- Promote accessible and relevant policies for women's financial education and provide technical support for strengthening enterprises and productive activities of women.
- Facilitate partnerships among governments, civil society, and development banks to guarantee greater access of women to products and services and the use of these.
- Promote the development of a specific gender policy in central banks, regulatory and supervisory institutions, which consider incentives for the institutions

that implement and use different services for women's financial inclusion and education and the promotion to the MSMEs.

- Promote financial inclusion and Fintech practices by considering the accessibility and geographic coverage to financial education, savings, credit, and insurance products.
- Promote women's financial inclusion through a gender-differentiated approach promoting women's financial inclusion by developing specific financial products and credit assistance to reach un-served and underserved women living in remote areas.

Main actions should be oriented to:

- Promote networks between key institutions at the macro and regional level and mid and national level
- Innovative practices and financial inclusion products tailored for women entrepreneurs at the territorial level.
- Promote portfolio models tailored to women's needs in different stages of their life cycle, reducing the risk of shock and promoting the productivity of their businesses.

The MYDEL strategy on Financial Inclusion and the MYDEL/CABEI Fund can be utilized as a good practice because it links the specific financial and credit product to the territorial business assistance and women's training on financial and Fin-tech education.

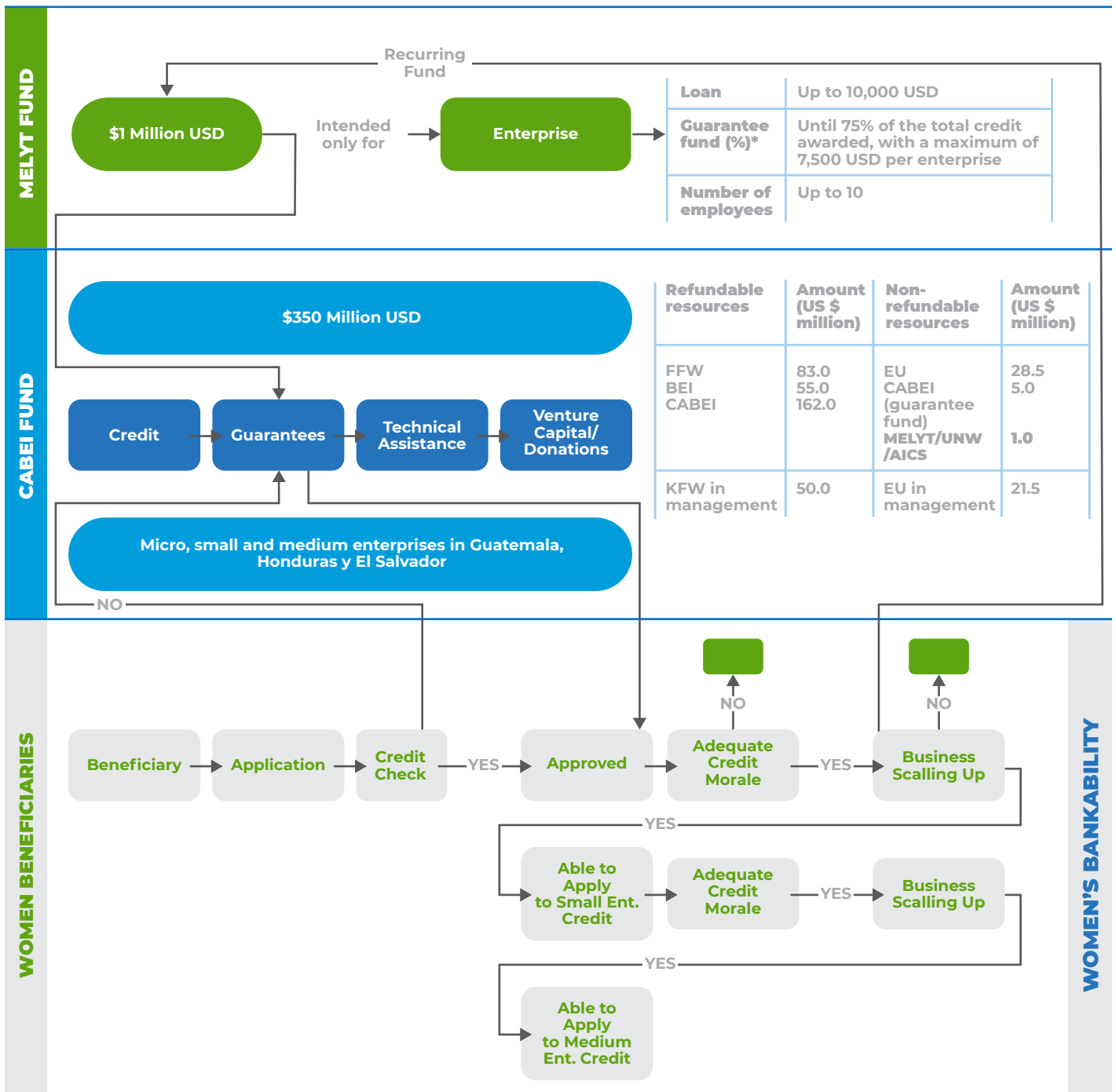
27 See the statement on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" at the Paris Global Summit on Development Banks (Paris Nov 2020)

BOX 4. THE UN WOMEN / CABEI FUND

A GOOD PRACTICE OF FINANCIAL INCLUSION: THE UN WOMEN/CABEI FUND

- In this scenario, the UN Women/CABEI Fund proposal, within the framework of MELYT, constitutes a good practice of financial inclusion for women's economic empowerment.
- The UN Women/ CABEI / Fund presents a portfolio of financial products and services and a proposal for impact evaluations to measure the effect of financial inclusion according to a multidimensional approach to the wellbeing of women and their families (such as intergenerational social mobility). It also promotes the financial inclusion of women as a thematic line of research and application.
- The fund is an example of synergies between different donors and institutions to establish mechanisms that support the autonomy and economic empowerment of women in the MSME sector affected by the COVID-19 emergency.
- Financially, MELYT's contribution has been limited, but it works as an innovative catalyst in terms of new services made available to women entrepreneurs and mobilize resources supporting gender equality. The proposal allows the leverage and mobilization of other technical and financial resources from donors and funders committed to promoting financial inclusion in a gender equality perspective.
- The greatest asset offered by the MELYT Fund is that the «guarantee fund» improves the possibilities of successful financial inclusion since part of the barriers to obtaining credit is the absence of guarantees. It is an example of how two financial services offered together can multiply of possibilities for women's financial and economic autonomy.
- An essential element included in the operational framework of the Fund is the training and development of business skills for women entrepreneurs who access credit facilities provided by the Microenterprise Service Centres (CAMs) located in the Trifinio region of each of the three countries.
- Training and technical assistance help improve the processes of production, transformation, and marketing of products or services and the financial education of women to make women's products and services more competitive in local and national markets and increase women's income. This can help to guarantee the payment of credits and to reduce the risk for women entrepreneurs.
- This programme can allow women, who suffered a loss of income due to the pandemic, to access risk/donation capital, to carry out necessary investments, or use the liquidity to sustain obligations with suppliers, leasing, people, social charges during the suspension of activities due to the mandatory quarantine. CABEI in the SICA region could easily extend the operational framework of the Fund since the CAMs supported by CENPROMYPE exist throughout the region, and they can offer territorial services.

BUSINESS PROCESS FLOW CABEI/MELYT FUND



In any case, before making decisions on the roadmap and the specific actions to implement, it is necessary to assess the following.

- The existing national, regional strategy/policy aimed at women’s economic empowerment and the status of financial inclusion and Fintech use by women in the selected areas.
- The regulatory framework and its alignment with the overall national policy for digital and financial inclusion for women.
- The main stakeholders of economic and financial systems for MSMEs and gaps in the access to the system in the remote areas of the country
- The private sector participation in achieving digital financial inclusion programs and products for women.
- Women’s access to information, capacity building, and literacy on financial and digital services in rural and remote areas.
- The key partnerships with the main stakeholders within the financial and territorial ecosystems for developing financial products for women.
- The key constituents considered for developing relevant, effective, and impactful initiatives and actions for «credit and other financial and not financial services» for women, such as technical assistance (face-to-face or virtual), financial linkages at territorial level, market access, and digital economy

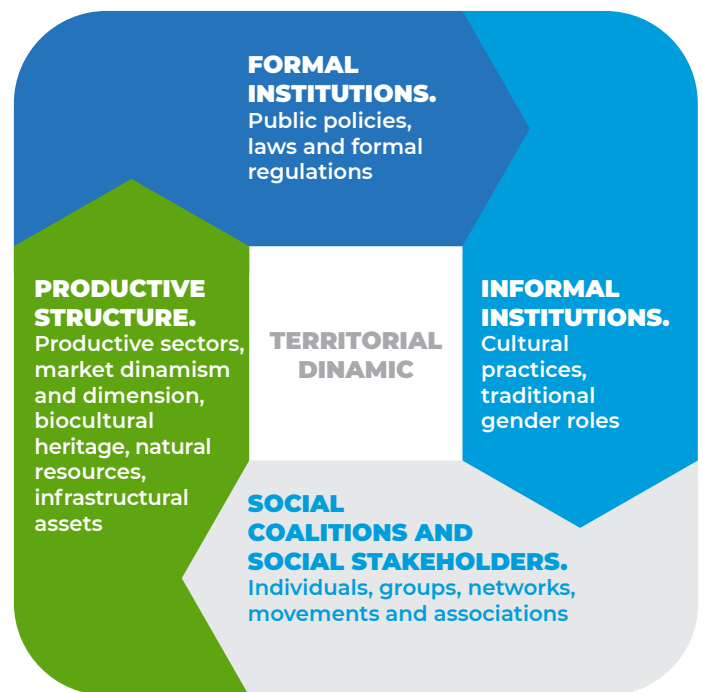
3.3.5 The Women’s Networks Mobilization

The challenge of promoting territorial development and women’s empowerment involves a series of questions related to the choice of a gender-differentiated or a gender mainstreamed approach. This framework follows a mixed method. The financial inclusion strategy is based

on a “gender-differentiated approach,” while the territorial economic empowerment strategy is based on a “gender mainstreamed approach” promoting women’s networks and business entrepreneurship mobilization within the territorial entrepreneurial ecosystem.

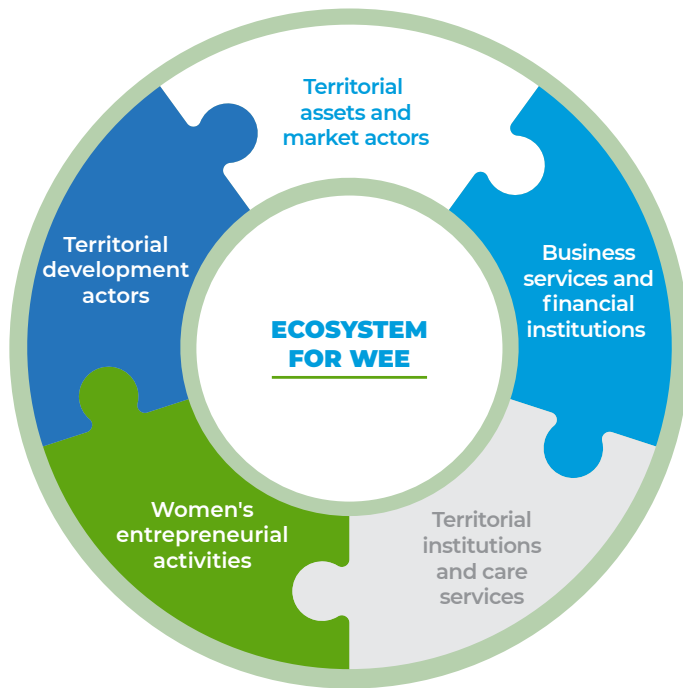
To that end, the operational framework should consider gender roles as a critical category for understanding territorial dynamics in the assessment phase of the program. The definition²⁸ of the territorial entrepreneurial ecosystem can consider the reproductive and care economy formal and informal institutions to understand better and address the barriers and gender gaps that women can face.

GENDER SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEM AT TERRITORIAL LEVEL



²⁸ The way in which inequalities between men and women are restricting women’s economic agency and negatively affecting the development opportunities of the communities are defined by the interaction between the productive and reproductive economic structure, the formal and informal institutions and the agency of the actors.

A territorial entrepreneurial ecosystem enabling women's economic empowerment should consider the following areas.



In the implementation phase, the operational framework must identify specific mechanisms and direct initiatives that can strengthen women's economic empowerment to support individual businesswomen and women's entrepreneurial associations (WEAs) and networks. The main activities should support:

- The capacity of WEAs to represent the needs of their members at the policy level.

- The WEA's access to the mainstream business and industry associations networking and the capacity to represent the needs and concerns of their associates.
- The economic support to the business activities of women for the communities' wellbeing.
- The groups' exchange both inside and outside the areas of the programme and regionally.
- The capacity to build and deliver meaningful and value-added services.

In the operational phases of the program, the networks' mobilization and support should be considered a central tool for the mainstreaming of gender equality.

Women's participation in decision-making in planning activities needs to be supported at the institutional level through "temporary special measures",²⁹ which promotes the acknowledgment of women's entrepreneurial and management capabilities within their communities. The temporary nature of such extraordinary measures should be designed to serve the specific goal of mainstreaming WEAs in TEE and EFE's decision-making and not to cast women subjected to discrimination as weak, vulnerable, and in need of extra measures to participate or compete in society. Special steps are essential to secure equality in participation and competition in various fields of public life, where social, health and economic burdens are placed on women due to gender stereotypes or their role in maternity.

²⁹ See [CEDAW Convention art 4](#).

SECTION 4

Key Recommendations

The main features to reproduce the MELYT framework for Women's Economic Empowerment programmes in the context of COVID-19 recovery are the following:

- Assess Political commitment to gender equality by national institutions and financial sensitivity to women's inclusion by financial institutions (public and private) and the local and national actors of the financial system that already operate efficiently in the supply of services to women-owned enterprises.
- Identify an innovative subject as the main partner and establish partnerships with high-level regional, national, and local institutions and authorities (Financial and Economic Ecosystem) on a set of public actions to articulate the development of women's entrepreneurship with democratic governance and gender equality.
- Conduct an analysis on the financial and economic ecosystem and the territorial entrepreneurial ecosystem, involving local and regional academic institutions to analyze the structural aspects that limit the women's access to financial and credit products and their participation in the territorial economic development.
- Support the local economic centers and platforms combining various business assistance services tailored to the needs of local women entrepreneurs. Investigate the sustainability, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of different interventions and the feasibility of digital and ICT technologies.
- Identify the role of women's associations and networks at the local and regional level in mediating the effectiveness of women's economic empowerment interventions. Enhance their role in defining the agency of female entrepreneurs and in addressing gendered power dynamics in households or businesses.
- Create and consolidate a system of alliances with specialized agencies and sectoral stakeholders to deliver innovative services for women's business (training, services for markets, digital skills) and to strengthen the capacities of national and local actors involved in the implementation of policies and programs for MSMEs, incorporating a gender perspective through technical support.
- Develop specific instruments for effective financial inclusion of women entrepreneurs with banking and credit institutions. Establish a portfolio of financial products (seeds or guarantee funds) appropriate to the specific needs of women, formal and informal entrepreneurs in all productive sectors, making them inclusive for rural, indigenous, and afro-descendant women.

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