

The INVEST Toolkit Guide *For Banks*

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Note: This report was made possible through support from the Argidius Foundation on behalf of the Growth Firms Alliance. It does not necessarily reflect the views of other GFA sponsors, who did not participate in its development.

The toolkit includes resources to help banks and other stakeholders apply the INVEST process effectively

Toolkit



Executive summary	Knowledge product	Toolkit	Toolkit guide
A high-level summary designed to quickly convey the purpose of the Toolkit and the INVEST process	Document that provides the rationale for the Toolkit by highlighting the SME banking gap and introducing INVEST as an effective approach to address it	An open and public digital platform that provides both TA funders and banks with a suite tools to support them through INVEST Process to unleash SME banking.	An overview guide that introduces the INVEST Toolkit and offers an overview of its contents through descriptive one-pagers for each tool
Banks			
TA Funders and Providers	Find the TA funder and TA provider version here .	Find the TA funder and TA provider version here .	



The INVEST approach highlights that effective SME banking is a process, not a product, built on key elements for success

Research & Diagnostics

Pilot & refinement

Roll out

Key elements for success



Incentives – Establish an incentive structure throughout the organization that enables long-term commitment across departments



Non-financial services – Enhance the value proposition to increase customer loyalty and financial returns



Versatile implementation – Ensure that a change management structure is in place across departments for implementation



Embed relationship banking – Implement a customer-centric relationship model that fosters higher customer satisfaction and cross-selling opportunities



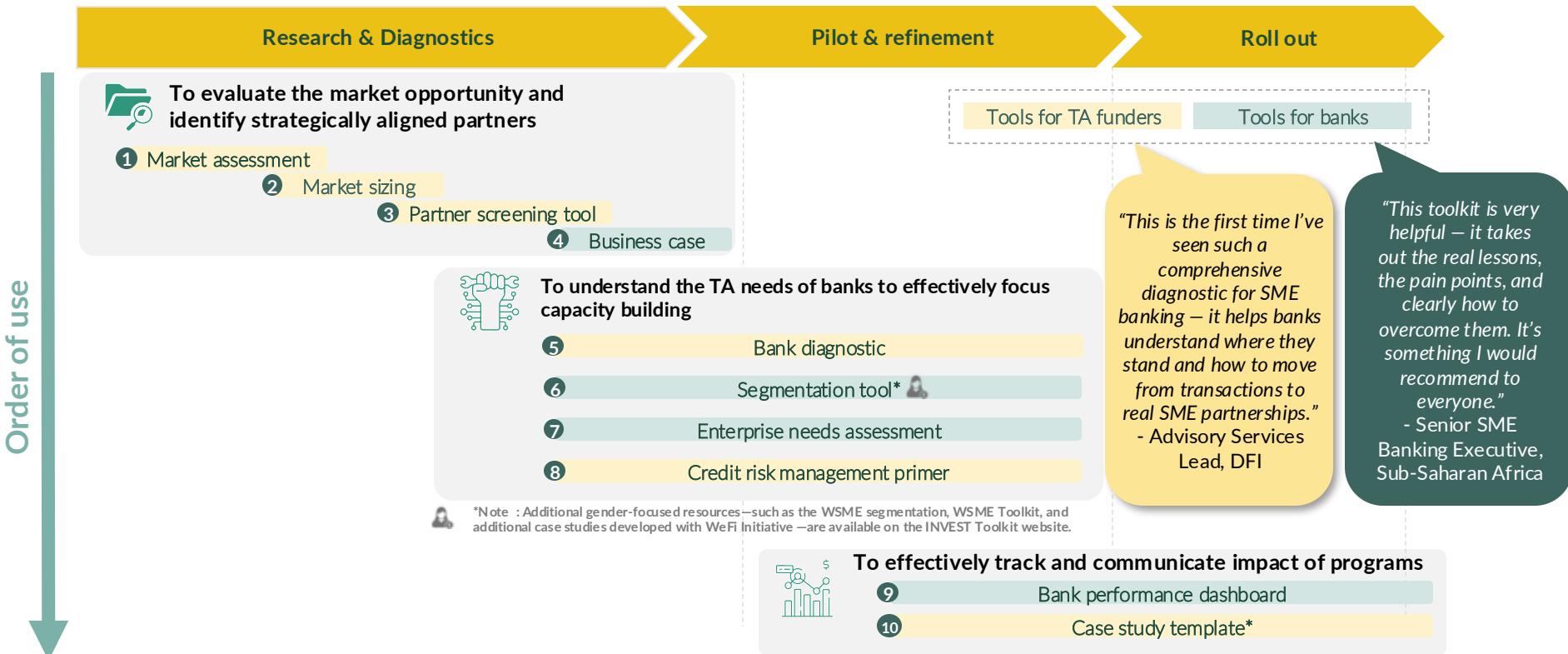
Segmentation – Identify market segments for which there is a strong business model; tailor the value proposition accordingly to nuanced needs and characteristics (e.g., sector, lifecycle stage, formality level, etc.)



Technology – Leverage data and digital tools to optimize new and existing client identification, credit assessment, and disbursement times—driving market share growth and profitability



The INVEST Toolkit provides banks with tools to apply the INVEST process and strengthen SME banking practices across diverse contexts



*Note: the case study template can also be leveraged to gain strategic alignment and advocate for program funding.

[The INVEST Toolkit can be found here](#)



Banks will have access to tools tailored to the key steps of the INVEST process

1. Market assessment tool

Analyze and compare potential markets across countries using key indicators to identify opportunities for SME banking expansion.

[Click here](#)

2. Market sizing tool

Quantify the size of the SME market and estimate the potential to serve MSMEs with formal financial services, including a gender-disaggregated view.

[Click here](#)

3. Business case

Project SME finance profitability using tailored assumptions. Includes cost/revenue inputs, scenario analysis, and sample outputs.

[Click here](#)

4. Bank diagnostic tool

Assess the internal capabilities of partner banks to deliver SME banking and identify technical assistance needs to build capacity.

[Click here](#)

5. Segmentation tool

Segment SME clients to understand their growth potential, business needs, and required services.

[Click here](#)

6. Enterprise needs assessment

Support banks to identify SMEs' financial and non-financial needs in a given market.

[Click here](#)

7. Credit risk management primer

Support banks and funders in identifying key credit risks in SME lending and provide strategies to mitigate these risks through internal improvements and TA support.

[Click here](#)

8. Bank performance dashboard

Helps banks track SME banking performance across segments, regions, and roles. Includes KPIs on outreach, portfolio quality, profitability, and gender inclusion

[Click here](#)

The process begins with **assessing the SME market landscape and identifying attractive opportunities** for growth (tools 1–3)

Banks can then evaluate their internal capacity and segment their SME clients to tailor the value proposition (tools 4–7)

The bank performance dashboard (tool 8) helps track progress, measure results, and guide ongoing improvements

The tools can be applied sequentially or in a flexible manner, depending on each bank's starting point and strategic priorities



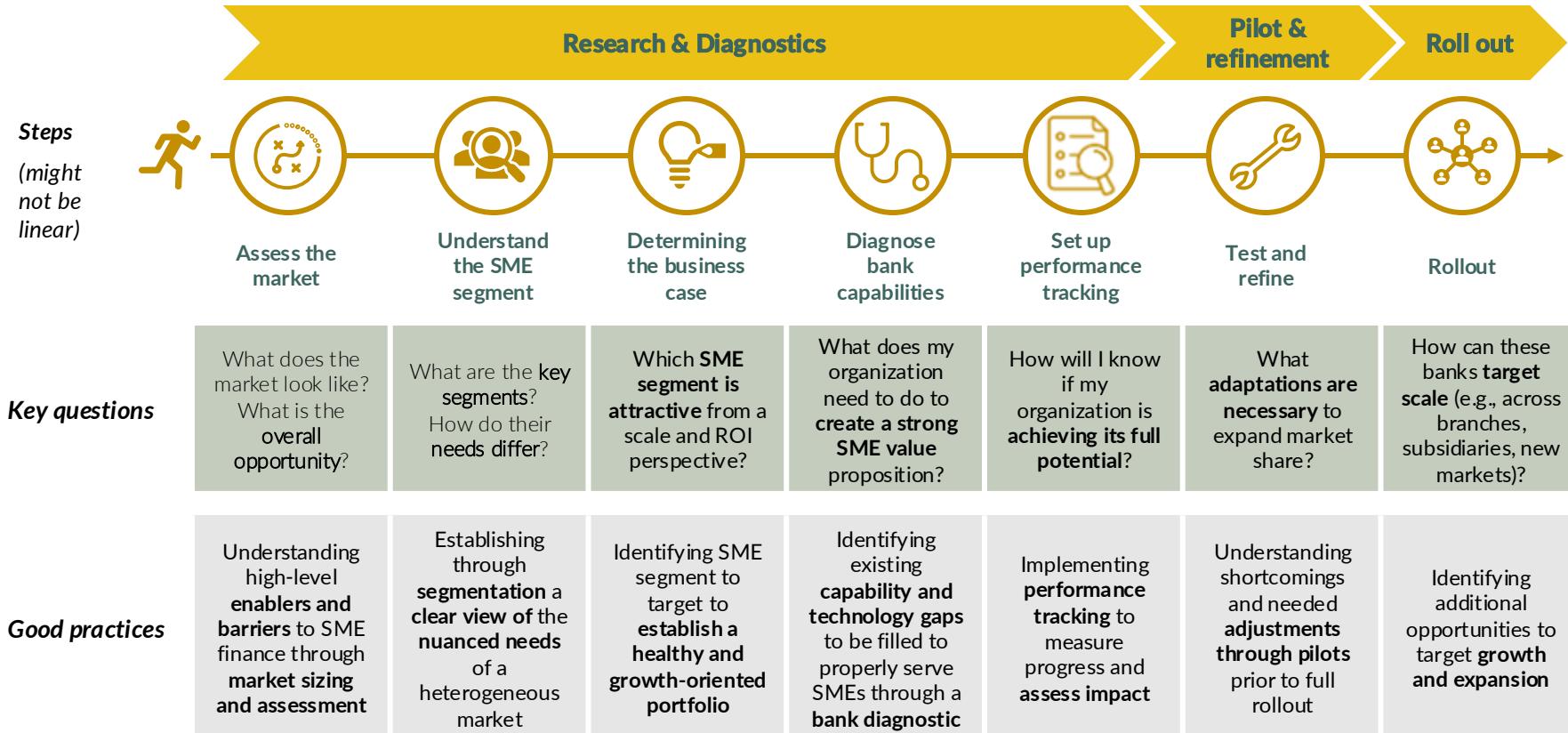
The tools can be leveraged by different financial sector stakeholders including funders, TA providers and regulators

 Relevance of tool by audience	Commercial banks	FSPs	Financial regulators	
1. Market assessment tool	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial service providers (FSPs) including non-bank financial institutions and risk capital providers
2. Market sizing tool	✓	✓		
3. Business case tool	✓	✓		
4. Bank diagnostic tool	✓			
5. Segmentation tool	✓	✓	✓	
6. Enterprise needs assessment tools	✓	✓		
7. Credit risk management primer	✓	✓		
8. Bank performance dashboard	✓			

As you use this guide and its tools, we welcome you to submit feedback directly to **Dalberg** and **ConsumerCentriX**. The goal is for this toolkit to enhance how stakeholders develop and deliver SME banking initiatives. If you have ideas of how to improve the toolkit or questions, please [click here to submit](#).



These tools guide banks through the critical questions at each stage of the SME banking journey



Note: The INVEST framework provides a simplified and generalized representation of elements of success applicable to the SME banking journey. It is intended for guiding purposes.



Each tool supports banks across the INVEST process, reinforcing key drivers of SME banking success

Tools	Description	Key questions answered	Success factors reinforced
① Market assessment tool	Excel-based model to help actors identify high-potential markets for SME banking expansion, based on key enablers and constraints	What does the market look like?	INVEST
② Market sizing tool	Excel-based model to estimate MSME market size by firm type (e.g., micro, small, medium) and gender. Predicts headcount, financial needs, and revenue potential.	What is the overall opportunity?	INVEST
③ Business case	Excel model projecting SME finance profitability using tailored assumptions. Includes cost/revenue inputs, scenario analysis, and sample outputs.	Which SME segment is attractive from a scale and ROI perspective?	INVEST
④ Bank diagnostic tool	Excel-based template to help funders and banks assess existing capabilities and gaps that need to be addressed to deliver an SME-aligned value proposition.	What do these banks need to do to create a strong SME value proposition?	INVEST
⑤ Segmentation tool	Two excel-based tools to segment SMEs into high, moderate, and low-growth groups based on business traits, challenges, and support needs.	What are the key segments? How do their needs differ?	INVEST
⑥ Enterprise needs assessment tools	Two excel-based tools to segment SMEs into high-, moderate-, and low-growth groups based on business traits, challenges, and needs.	What are the key segments? How do their needs differ?	INVEST
⑦ Credit risks management primer	PDF primer highlighting key internal credit risks banks face in SME banking, along with mitigation strategies and the potential role of TA, supported by real-world examples	What do these banks need to do to create a strong SME value proposition?	INVEST
⑧ Bank performance dashboard	Tableau dashboard to track SME banking performance across segments, regions, and roles. Includes KPIs on outreach, portfolio quality, profitability, and gender inclusion	Is the organization achieving its full potential? What adaptations are necessary to expand market share?	INVEST

Order of use

While the toolkit includes eight standalone tools, many are interconnected and can be used in complementary ways to strengthen SME banking outcomes

1 Market assessment tool

Helps stakeholders benchmark countries by relative attractiveness based on key enablers and constraints

2 Market sizing tool

Stakeholders can continue to evaluate a specific geography by estimating the overall market opportunity

3

Business case

Helps banks project SME finance profitability using tailored assumptions. Includes cost/revenue inputs, scenario analysis, and sample outputs.

8

Bank performance dashboard

Helps banks track SME banking performance across segments, regions, and roles. Includes KPIs on outreach, portfolio quality, profitability, and gender inclusion

4 Bank diagnostic tool

The WSME segmentation (5), enterprise needs assessment (6), credit risk management guide (7) **can be referenced to determine the key capability gaps for banks to focus on**



7

Enterprise needs assessment tools

The segmentation tool (5) can serve to **select the target segments** that should be assessed using enterprise needs assessment tools

6

5 Segmentation tool

The challenges and needs identified for target WSME segments can **complement** the bank diagnostic (4), enterprise needs assessment (6), and credit risk management guide (7) to inform the optimized value proposition

7

Credit risk management primer

To identify and select the most appropriate risk mitigation strategy the bank diagnostic process and product assessment areas (4) and the input regarding challenges and needs for specific WSME segments can be referenced (5)



A market assessment tool can assist banks, TA funders and providers identify high-potential markets for SME banking expansion

1

Tool Overview																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													
Market assessment tool	Description & Use		Objectives	Resources	This tool will support strategic SME banking decisions by helping assess market readiness and potential for SME portfolio development																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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Key Components The Excel Tool is fully automated and serves as a scalable foundation for informed strategic planning and business case development. To enable meaningful comparison across diverse markets, each indicator is scored from 0 to 1, benchmarking countries against top-performing peers within their region or income group. This approach distills pre-existing datasets into an accessible format, helping users identify areas of relative strength, weakness, and opportunity.	Pillar	Description			Visual Representation																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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A market sizing tool for banks to gain a sense of the overall size of the market for serving MSMEs with a full set of formal financial services

2

Tool Overview



Market sizing tool	Description & Use	Objectives	Resources	This tool will enable stakeholders to quantify the size of the market and opportunity for targeting MSMEs (split by size and gender) with formal financial services
	Excel-based model to quantify the market size and opportunity to serve MSMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Estimate the market size of a given country, split by enterprise size and sexEstimate the opportunity to meet unmet demand with financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Excel tool✓ User guide✓ Video tutorial	 <p>This tool will enable stakeholders to quantify the size of the market and opportunity for targeting MSMEs (split by size and gender) with formal financial services</p>

Key Components

The results of the model are predicted in three main dimensions, shown on the accordingly named sheets:

- Headcount:** the number of entrepreneurs and businesses in the market - with split by size and gender, using the IFC definition of women-owned/led businesses
- Volumes:** the amount of financial needs served currently and in a projected scenario as per the perimeters of the model.
- Revenue:** the likely (after risk) revenue from serving the estimated volume of financial services under current market conditions – shown in the principal categories of financial needs, includes interest and other fee revenues from transactions, deposits, loans and insurance.

All output is shown as a split by sex (women versus men –owned/led) and size categories of the business:

- self-employed and micro = <5 employees
- Very small = 5 to 10 employees
- Small = 10 to 50 employees
- medium = 50+ employees

The model will be shown in dollars and in local currency.

Visual Representation

Key Outputs: Overview of the principal results of the Market Sizing Tool		
Country	Bank Case Data	Market Profile by Bank Case
Date to be used		Total Selected Segments
		Women Share of Women
BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHICS		Men Share of Men
Total number of entrepreneurs, Baseline	411,500	166,021 20.5%
Share banked (any account), Baseline	25.2%	19.5%
Share banked (any account), Predicted	150.0%	100.0%
BUSINESS FINANCE VOLUMES		
Total liabilities mobilized from segments, Baseline	\$27,330,946	\$2,326,562 8.9%
Total liabilities mobilized from segments, Predicted	681,335,883	72,042,857 10.8%
implied upside potential above baseline	352.4%	372.3%
Total assets outstanding from segments, Baseline	\$174,224,256	\$15,053,640 26.7%
Total assets outstanding from segments, Predicted	193,810,256	13,287,000 11.7%
implied upside potential above baseline	858.9%	462.1%
Components of business finance		
Short-term loans (operational & working capital), Baseline	\$8,641,369	\$2,326,562 9.6%
Short-term loans (operational & working capital), Predicted	14,048,251	33,177,000 23.6%
implied upside potential above baseline	239.2%	352.7%
Matching term loans (Capital), Baseline	\$66,932	\$66,932 100.0%
Matching term loans (Capital), Predicted	12,481,729	767,149 6.1%
implied upside potential above baseline	200,007.7%	203,912.4%
BUSINESS FINANCE REVENUES		
Total revenue per segment, Baseline	\$28,245,060	\$0,971,461 34.6%
Total revenue per segment, Predicted	3,007,072,735	\$45,440,677 12.0%
implied upside potential above baseline	107.1%	473.7%
Net interest income from business loans per segment, Baseline	\$,367,253	\$95,952 8.0%
Net interest income from business loans per segment, Predicted	1,386,753	513,700 37.5%
implied upside potential above baseline	277.9%	133.7%
Net from business loans after risk cost per segment, Baseline	\$705,663	\$66,252 9.8%
Net from business loans after risk cost per segment, Predicted	1,311,753	451,700 33.6%
implied upside potential above baseline	210.0%	269.7%

A business case tool enabling banks to quantify the profitability timeline of providing a suite of financial services to MSME markets

3

Tool Overview

Business case tool	Description & Use	Objectives	Resources
	<p>Excel-based model to allow banks to quantify the business case for targeting MSMEs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess breakeven and profitability over time to identify a bank's priority markets Guide banks on market-entry or scale-up decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Excel template ✓ PDF user guide ✓ Video tutorial
<h3>Key Components</h3> <p>The model is designed to reflect the operational reality of the financial institution, by inputting:</p>			 <p>This tool will enable banks to quantify and assess the business case for targeting priority MSME markets with specific financial and non-financial services</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution's own revenue assumptions: through expected interest rates, fees charged, etc. depending on products available to MSMEs The institution's own operational costs: reflecting various distribution channels, banking models, non-financial services and more. <p>Embedded assumptions will be described, and the model will have sensitivity analysis built in.</p>			<h3>Visual Representation</h3> 
<p>The model will illustrate an example with dummy data and will enable the use of dollars and local currency.</p>			



This tool will enable banks to quantify and assess the business case for targeting priority MSME markets with specific financial and non-financial services

The bank diagnostic tool helps banks assess their existing capability gaps to inform an optimized SME banking value proposition to maximize scale and profitability

4

Tool Overview					
Bank diagnostic tool	Description & Use	Objectives	Resources		
	Excel-based template to help banks assess capabilities (including digital) and potential gaps that should be addressed to deliver a scalable and profitable SME banking value proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess banks' capacity and internal readiness to deliver SME bankingIdentify capacity-building opportunities to strengthen the business model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Excel tool✓ Illustrative examples✓ PDF user guide		
 <p>This tool helps banks identify capability gaps to be filled to optimize the SME banking value proposition</p>					
Key Components		Assessment Area			
An Excel-based tool with dynamic indicators and scores to identify a bank's SME maturity level and potential areas for TA support. Assessment categories would include:	Strategy	Description			
	Talent and org. structure	Identifies banks' organizational capacity to deliver SME banking offerings at scale			
	Competitive positioning	Evaluates banks' understanding of their competitive positioning as well as their key business priorities based on growth opportunities			
	Processes	Captures banks' operational practices and procedures towards SME banking, including the use of digital tools and data analytics			
	Product	Assesses banks' financial and non-financial offerings and the financial performance of their SME portfolios			
Visual Representation					
					
					

Segmentation tools enable banks to understand the financial and business support needs of various segments of SMEs

5

Tool Overview



Segmentation tool

Description & Use

Two Excel-based tools to allow stakeholders to apply a new growth-based segmentation to SME customers and identify needs and opportunities

Objectives

- Identify the distribution of MSMEs across growth segments
- Understand the characteristics, needs, and entrepreneur profile of WSMEs

Resources

- Excel tools
- PDF User guide



This tool provides banks and TA funders with a data-driven segmentation framework to better target financial and business support for SMEs

Key Components

For wider sampling, download the tool and input questions into an online survey tools (ex. Survey Monkey). The first five questions of the screener classify respondents into a growth category (high, moderate, low). The subsequent questions enable the tool to assign respondents to their respective segments – using weighted scores.

Enter the collected responses in the 'input response sheet' - being careful to leave corresponding cells blank for any omitted questions. The tool will automatically assign each survey response to a segment, in column A. Review segmentation classification - on the "high-level insights" sheet - the share of customers across each segment and the growth plan data.

For individual screening, a separate tool can be used as a questionnaire. Populate responses to questions. The segment and profile will be determined based on responses. Review insights on the profile.

The SME Segmentation Framework, with Growth Segments and Entrepreneur Profiles by Driving Force

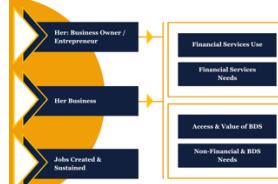


Visual Representation

Segment		High Growth		Moderate Growth		Low Growth		Total	
		Segment	Share	Segment	Share	Segment	Share	Segment	Share
High Growth	High Growth	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
High Growth	Aspired Expansion	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
High Growth	Stability	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
High Growth	Legacy Building	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
High Growth	Livelihood	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
High Growth	Survival	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	High Growth	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	Aspired Expansion	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	Stability	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	Legacy Building	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	Livelihood	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Moderate Growth	Survival	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	High Growth	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	Aspired Expansion	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	Stability	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	Legacy Building	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	Livelihood	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%
Low Growth	Survival	High Growth	50.00%	Moderate Growth	40.00%	Low Growth	10.00%	Total	100.00%

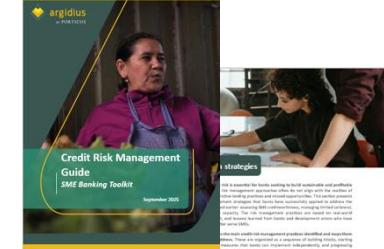
Enterprise needs assessment tools enable banks to determine SMEs needs, both financial and non-financial, and identify opportunities to target SME segments

6

Tool Overview				
Enterprise needs assessment	Description & Use	Objectives	Resources	
	Quantitative tool (survey) and qualitative tools (focus groups or individual interviews) to support banks to assess the demand among SMEs in a specific market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enable banks to understand the demand and needs of SMEsEnable banks to determine the opportunities to serve SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ TOR template✓ Interview guides✓ Analysis excel sheet	
 These tools and guidance will support banks to conduct primary research with SMEs to understand financial and non-financial needs and opportunities				
Key Components		Visual Representation		
<p>Tools to support qualitative research, including interview guide and focus group guide and tools to support quantitative research, including questionnaire/survey.</p> <p>User manual including tips on recruiting SME samples, data collection and analysis, and more.</p> <p>Topics covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Business owner's personal traits and skillsBusiness traits including size, industry, collateral, technology, etc.Challenges and barriers to business growthJobs created and sustainedUse of financial products and services and needsaccess to business development servicesBusiness support needs.		 <p>The diagram illustrates the survey process. It starts with three arrows pointing to a central box: 'Her: Business Owner / Entrepreneur', 'Her Business', and 'Jobs Created & Sustained'. Arrows point from these to a box containing 'Financial Services Use' and 'Financial Services Needs'. Another arrow points from this box to a second box containing 'Access & Value of BDS' and 'Non Financial & BDS Needs'.</p> <p>ASSESS THE DEMAND</p> <p>Step 1: Download and review the survey provided</p> <p>HOW TO!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The survey includes questions to understand the profiles and personal characteristics of and non-financial access and needs.It also includes questions about the business and its financial needs.Then, directly edit questions, add, and/or delete questions that are not relevant to your audience.SurveyMonkey provides a detailed guide on how to use the survey editor to make changes that have implications around WSMET's contribution to quality jobs and may not be as relevant to other surveying methods in WSMET. <p>Step 2: Input the survey into an online survey tool</p> <p>There are many different online survey platforms, including Google Forms, Kobo Toolbox, SurveyMonkey and others.</p> <p>Each offer pros and cons. For example, Kobo Toolbox can be completed offline, while many others require stable internet connection.</p> <p>THINGS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Who will be completing the survey?Functionality is key to quality data.What survey tool are the researchers most comfortable with?Ensure quality control by reviewing the first batch closely. <p>Will it be sent out to WSMET for them to complete on their own with a researcher completing it alongside while interviewing the WSMET? We recommend the latter option for highest quality data. If the former, the survey functionality especially matters to avoid user error.</p> <p>Question and answer logic should be set to eliminate room for error. The survey should be tested by multiple people and tested by following different responses i.e. conditionality to ensure proper functionality.</p> <p>This may inform the selection of the tool.</p> <p>Pause survey collection after 10 or 15 surveys have been completed. Download and closely review each survey to summarize to check that responses are consistent across and the path is logical. Go back to surveys to communicate any necessary changes or adjustments in how questions are collected or input.</p> 		

The credit risk management primer can help banks identify, select, and implement risk mitigation strategies to strengthen the SME value proposition

7

Tool Overview			
Credit risk management primer	Description & Use	Objectives	Resources
Key Components Practical guide with actionable insights on key SME credit risks, mitigation strategies, and TA approaches based on real world examples	Overview of key internal credit risks banks face in SME banking, along with mitigation strategies and the potential role of TA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify key credit risks that limit SME lendingShowcase how banks have addressed these risks through real world examplesOutline risk-mitigation TA opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ PDF Credit risk management guide✓ PDF User guide
Key SME banking risks	Risk management practices	TA support strategies (illustrative)	Visual Representation
Difficulty assessing SME credit-worthiness	Developing and deploying SME credit scoring and rating models, use alternative and non-traditional credit scoring models, and adopting cash-flow based lending techniques	Support the design and integration of SME-specific scoring tools and provide analytics support/training	
Lack of collateral or enforceable security	Accepting movable assets (e.g., equipment, inventory, receivables), using alternative data sources, and deploying supply chain and hybrid financing structures	Assisting in the design and expansion of collateral registries, providing guarantee schemes, and supporting non-traditional collateral reforms	
Delivering credit efficiently due to capacity constraints	Establishing dedicated SME units, training credit and relationship staff, and digitizing and streamlining credit workflows to avoid delays and reduce costs	Facilitating staff training programs, SME tool development, and peer learning across banks	

Sources: Aceli. (2025). [Conducting a SME Credit Risk Process Review](#). IDOS. (2025). [Can Guarantees Effectively Leverage Financing for SMEs?](#). Aceli. (20225). [Year 3 Learning Report](#)

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This tool assists banks identify and select internal credit risk management practices that strengthen the SME value proposition

Visual Representation



A bank performance dashboard that compiles SME Banking key performance indicators (KPIs), enabling banks to monitor and track performance with visual illustration

8

Bank performance dashboard

Description & Use

Excel-based sample dashboard and visual illustration of KPIs in Tableau to allow measurement of SME banking performance

Objectives

- Provide recommended KPIs to track SME banking performance
 - Help banks build dashboards with multiple views (e.g., geography, gender)

Resources

- ✓ Tableau dashboard
 - ✓ User guide
 - ✓ Excel analysis sheet



This tool will enable banks to track and monitor performance and progress in its SME Banking strategy, with metrics visually illustrated

Key Components

The sample dashboard included in the tool will illustrate through graphics progress across all KPIs to be able to assess the financial institution's SME banking performance, including five areas:

1. Business banker
 2. Regional manager
 3. Credit manager
 4. Marketing manager
 5. Executive

Visual representation in Tableau will illustrate 4-5 views of data - including by geography, product, gender.

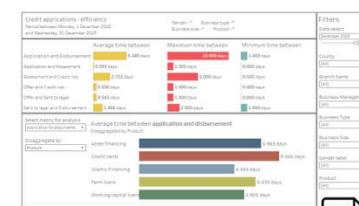
Tool will include best practices in data management and ongoing use. Training materials provided will include a combination of written how-to guide and videos with voice over.

Visual Representation

Portfolio Analysis - Credit



Applications Efficiency - Credit



*For more
information visit*



Thank you!

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