

ARAB-EU

Business Facilitation Network

**3rd Working Group Meeting, Dead Sea, Jordan,
October 20th – 22nd 2015**

Participating Delegations:

Denmark

Confederation of Danish Industry (DI)

Egypt

Compliance office and sustainable
Development (ECO SD)
Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)

GCC

Federation of GCC Chambers
Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Jordan

Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI)

Palestine

Federation of Palestinian chambers of
Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA)

Morocco

Confederation General Des Eentreprises Du
Maroc (CGM)

Algeria

Forum des Chefs des Enterprises (FCE)

Tunisia

Union Tunisienne de l`Indutrie Du Commerce
at de l`Atisanat (UTICA)

Lebanon

The Association of Lebanese industrialists
Chamber of Beirut & Mount Lebanon

Summary

The third and last working group meeting of 2015 took place in Dead Sea, Jordan, on the 20th-21st of October and was followed by a training workshop on the 22nd of October, revolving around policy advocacy. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Jordan Chamber of Industry.

The first day had a dual focus: 1) how to improve investments in the current economical and political climate, and 2) green growth and green competitiveness across the MENA region with Egypt as case. The former involved discussion with the Director of Jordan Investment Commission about barriers and opportunities for companies investing in the MENA region. The latter included an IFC presentation on green competitiveness in Egypt together with a presentation on FEI/ECOs efforts in this area. The day was concluded with news and updates from the members about countries and organizations.

During the second day, the highly successful case of public-private dialogue in the Jordan Valley Water Forum was presented by an Irrigation agricultural Engineer which was followed by a discussion facilitated by DI on how the AE-Network might feed into and benefit from the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). A draft of the first draft of the AE-Network's International Business Catalogue was presented and updates were provided on the two B2B platforms. The day was concluded with a commitment to work towards green transition of the MENA region, starting 2016. A common press release was formulated.

The third day was a workshop about policy advocacy by business organisations facilitated by DI, presenting a new guide developed by them based on more than 100 years of experience in the area. The guide will be available online in the second edition by mid November and in Arabic early January.

Day 1: 20th of October

Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Ayman Hatahet – Chairman/ Jordan Chamber of Industry

Mr. Hatahet welcomed all esteemed guests and was pleased to announce that Jordan Chamber of Industry and the DI will be working together to further develop the Arab EU network's goals and objectives through joint efforts with the members of the network, and looks forward to be able to develop a common understanding of where the network is heading as well as how to promote further collaboration towards enhancing the regional trade and economic integration. He moreover stressed that it is of extreme importance for chambers and member driven organizations to become more involved in policy making and to engage in dialogue and partnership with the public sector.

Key Note: How to Improve Investments in the Current Economical and Political Climate

HE Dr. Montaser Al Oqlah – Director/ Jordan Investment Commission

Dr. Al Oqlah tapped into one of the most demanding issue in the MENA region which is improving the current economical climate. He discussed this issue, addressed the challenges ahead of it, and pointed out the future success for economic integration with the EU. Dr. Al Oqlah reflected on the AGADIR agreement that did not succeed improving intraregional trade, therefore he stressed the importance of the partnership agreement and that it must be stronger in order to improve the economical climate in the MENA region. During this session he gave a comprehensive presentation about the DCFTAs and the Jordan-US FTA, where one of its cross cutting challenges. He also pointed out that Jordan was implementing a new investment law with a joint platform for all stakeholders in Jordan.

Introduction

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

Mr. Kristensen welcomed all esteemed guests and walked them through the agenda then a brief history about the network was demonstrated highlighting the updates of the network for the past 5 years. The implementation of the relevant legislations to facilitate investments in renewable energy will be the next focus, in addition to achieving the ambitions of the network to be the leading cross-regional business network, paving the way for private sector lead growth in and between the MENA region and the EU.

Egypt's Case; Green Business Opportunities and Barriers in the Arab Region

Farid Tadros - Operations Officer of T&C Green Competitiveness MENA, IFC

Mr. Tadros discussed the topic of green business opportunities in the Arab region. He firstly discussed the energy challenge and opportunities globally and the impact on the industrial competitiveness. Afterwards he demonstrated this topic in a regional context (MENA region) and in terms of benchmarking. This session was concluded with a discussion on the case of Egypt in energy challenge and the available opportunities, and how can the manufacturing sector be supported. Throughout the session he briefed about the Smart technology and energy efficient program, the clean technology and the key issues and challenges that may arise when developing it in Egypt.

Overview of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy in Egypt & FEI Support to Industrial Sector

Eng. Ahmed Kamal – Chief Executive Officer/ Federation of Egyptian Industries, Environmental Compliance Office and Sustainable Development

Eng. Kamal discussed the topic of energy efficiency & renewable energy in Egypt, throughout his presentation he stated that the solar energy in Egypt only accounts for 0.4% of current electricity generation as wind takes up 1.7%. Massive government projects are underway in the area which represents great opportunity for foreign technology and investment. Local companies, however, also have significant potential for gaining from active participation in the green transition. Cost savings, enhanced productivity, and increased international competitiveness are just some of the benefits, which also include better CSR profiles which are increasingly demanded globally. Mr. Kamal lastly outlined the efforts of FEI/ECO to improve energy efficiency enhancing efforts amongst Egyptian companies and invited for cooperation in the AE-network on this topic.

Tour De Table (News& Updates from Members)

The first day of the meeting was concluded with news and updates from the member organizations. This part serves as experience sharing exercise about what is facing the member organization and how can they improve their business environments. One of the good news announced during this session was about the Nobel Prize that UTICA won.

DAY 2: 21st of October

Public-Private Dialogue as a Catalyst for Improving the Business Environment

Nayef Seder - Irrigation Agricultural Engineer

Mr. Nayef presented the case on collaborative policy making on water in the Jordan Valley. The Jordan Valley Water Forum was created as a Public-Private dialogue platform and has successfully structured the dialogue between the government and the water users in the valley; it gave the opportunity for farmers and water users and organizations to discuss their issues. The case demonstrates how PPD improves the business environment. Subsequent discussions revolved around examples from other countries that used dialogue to successfully improve the business environment.

JCI: Energy Conference in November & SME Regional Conference in April 2016

Dr. Maher Al Mahrouq – Director General/ Jordan Chamber of Industry

Dr. Mahrouq informed the participants about two upcoming events of Jordan Chamber of Industry. The Energy conference on 17th of November which idea stems from JCI's initiative to position itself together with local chambers of industry on the technical solutions and strategies with regards to energy and renewable energy in the industrial sector, as well as building its capacity in this vital field. Dr. Mahrouq also briefed attendees about the second Regional SMEs conference in April 2016 which will open the discussion of the role Chambers & Business Associations (CBAs) in unleashed SMEs potential through PPD.

B2B Platforms – Update

Mr. Hassen Dhrif – Open Vision / UTICA

Mr. Karim Elsayh – Managing Partner / KonnectI

Mr. Dhrif gave an update about the progress of the platform called Arab Doing Business Platform. It was agreed that he will provide a business plan which will be distributed amongst the network members in order to decide whether to move ahead.

Afterwards Mr. Elsayh gave an update about the network's B2B Platform, KonnectI, and the progress of engaging companies and sign-ups. They platform is moving ahead fast: more than 10,000 member companies have signed up and more than 400 B2B introductions have been made. More than 120,000 page views and more than 40,000 user sessions. There are users from all Arab countries and almost all EU countries, and the platform is growing organically, hence through referrals.

AE-Network's International Business Services Catalogue

Ms. Hiba Abu Taleb - Head of Secretariat / Arab-EU Business Facilitation Network

Following up on the network's second meeting group in June the Secretariat developed a draft of the International Service Catalogue. The main aim of this Catalogue is to better aid the investment prospects and improve cooperation between the companies of AE member organisations by presenting the services offered by the network members. It thus gives a brief overview of the network, its participants and the services that each BMO provide to facilitate investment inflows to their own countries. It was agreed that the secretariat will draft a unified list of services provided by all organizations and distribute it among members for their comments and feedback. Hereafter the final draft will be disseminated.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Role of the AE-Network Organizations

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

Mr. Kristensen highlighted the UN sustainable development goals and how it can help the AE-network members in future endeavors, as the sustainable development goals embrace the private sector growth as means for development and poverty reduction. Therefore, during the session Mr. Kristensen and the participants discussed the role of the network in order to support these goals, and whether each organization alone already works for supporting it.

Drafting Joint Press Release

Group Work

At the end of the meeting a draft of the press release was presented and discussed. A final draft is distributed with this summary and is also on the AE-website. It is for all AE members to use in their respective countries. The main conclusion is that the network, based on agreement reached during the meeting, will focus its efforts in 2016 on Green Energy and how CBAs can push for and facilitate the green transition that the region is so much in need of.

Day 3: 22nd of October

Policy Advocacy Skills Workshop

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

A half-day workshop about policy advocacy skills of business organisations was conducted by Mr. Kristensen. He briefed about evidence-based policy advocacy and went through the main guidelines and principles about the topic. DI's Policy Advocacy guide for business organizations was presented and utilized as a material of discussion and real-life case studies. It can be downloaded from the AE website.

Throughout this workshop groups were asked to discuss some issues within their countries. One of the issues discussed was the effect of the Libyan crisis on the Tunisian market. This issue led to stop the exports from Tunisia to Libya due to the closure of borders between the two countries; this affected the Tunisian market as the Libyan market is considered one of the important markets for Tunisia. In addition to the economical negative impact through closing the producing companies that usually exports to Libya, what is more loses in job opportunities. Subsequently Tunisia is trying to find alternative exporting channels on the short run to insure no loss in the Tunisian market share.

Next Working Group Meeting:

- ✓ Early 2016: 1st working group meeting for the year 2016 - Details and invitations will be sent later

Until we meet again the Secretariat will:

- ✓ Edit the International service Catalogue and release the final version.
- ✓ Complete the capacity assessment survey

Points of interest:

All presentations from the working group meeting and the Policy Advocacy Skills workshop are available on: <http://www.ae-network.org/>

Yours sincerely



Niels Tanderup Kristensen
Deputy Director
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List of Participants

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