

ARAB-EU

Business Facilitation Network

2nd Working Group Meeting, Cairo, Egypt, June 2nd – 4th 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

Council of Saudi Chambers

Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Libya

Libyan Businessmen Council

Morocco

Confederation General Des Eentreprises

Du Maroc (CGM)

Tunisia

Union Tunisienne de l'Indutrie Du

Commerce at de l'Atisanat (UTICA)

Jordan

Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI)

Summary

The second working group meeting of 2015 took place in Cairo, Egypt, on the 2nd & 3rd of June 2015 and was followed by a training workshop on the 4th of June, the training evolved around international services. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Environmental Compliance Office / Federation of Egyptian Industries, and is the second of three meetings planned for the year, it was agreed that the last meeting will take place in Jordan during October.

The first day was mostly designated for the Network's formalization process; discussions encompassed the Articles of Association, List of Potential Partners, the Value Proposition, evaluation from previous meeting as well as presenting the Network's Facebook page. The day also included a presentation on Egypt's Economic Outlook, updates from partners and an analysis of complementary Network's. The DI Offices Catalogue was also presented along with an update about the B2B Platform. The second day included group work on organizations' business services and introduction of policy advocacy roundtables followed by highlights, updates and best practice sharing from present members. Aside the meeting, a site visit was conducted in addition to a B2B networking session with Egyptian businessmen.

Welcome and Introduction

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

Mr. Kristensen welcomed all esteemed guests and walked them through the agenda, then gave a brief introduction of the AE Network, as well as the main findings of the EU-MENA Trade and Regional Integration analysis which was the theme of newsletter's latest edition. Afterwards the floor was open for updates and introductions from members.

Egypt's Economic Outlook

Eng. Ahmad Kamal - Executive Director Environmental Compliance Office & Sustainable Development / Federation of Egyptian Industries

Eng. Kamal introduced an economic overview about Egypt and stressed that the Federation of Egyptian Industries is committed to the network's current work and future prospects, in particular elevating the intra-Mena cooperation between member organizations. His presentation also included a brief about the investment climate in Egypt and the steps carried out by the government to promote investment in the country and particularly the large scale projects witnessed in Egypt's Economic Development Conference: Egypt the Future held in March 2015.

Evaluation Results: Where is the Network Heading?

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

Ms. Abu Taleb gave a brief demonstration of the two evaluations conducted during the first working group meeting held in January, results were positive with fairly high satisfaction levels about the content, experts, meetings' organizing arrangements as well as networking and member mutual cooperation prospects. The results indicated clear required points of action, on top of which was recruiting new members, particularly from the EU.

DI Offices Catalogue

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

The catalogue provides an overview of DI's international offices worldwide and the services they offer to assist member companies to achieve international success through a set of selected business services. Mr. Kristensen explained how partners can benefit from the services offered, and took the group through a real example of utilization, demonstrating the case of “cooperation between DI and the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) in the Russian Market”. This cooperation's main purpose was to assist FEI in opening market prospect to their members – working in the engineering sector – in their exports endeavors to Russia. DI's Moscow office welcomed this initiative and a representative of the Egyptian Business Council was based in it to oversee intended activities which mainly included market research, representing FEI in exhibitions, and provide members with business leads and contracts.

8th Global Public Private Dialogue (PPD) Conference

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

Mr. Kristensen briefed participants about the PPD conference which was hosted at DI premises in Copenhagen in cooperation with the World Bank and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The conference was held in March 2015, and four AE Network member organizations participated, namely; Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, Algeria. The following introductory video is available: <https://www.wetransfer.com/downloads/8c8796313fd03d113d0da25a733ebb6220150319100512/8cd16ce951f1310b7dc680b0e692d57120150319100512/ceb0af>

Introduction of Webpage and Contact Form

Ms. Karen Panum Thisted – Consultant / Confederation of Danish Industry

Ms. Thisted gave participants a tour of the Network's webpage: <http://www.ae-network.org/>, explaining about its sections and how to access relevant information. Afterwards, the newly developed Contact form was introduced; the downloadable document is suggested to be used whenever a member company from a Business Member Organization (BMO) or Chamber of industry and / or Commerce that is a member of the ARAB - EU Business Facilitation Network is facilitating a request on behalf of member company for any international business enquiry. The form can be downloaded and viewed through: <http://www.ae-network.org/>.

Complementary Networks Analysis

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

In the context of the process of formalizing the AE network, the AE secretariat introduced an in-depth analysis of the AE network's strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other similar networks. The comparison included six cross cutting networks, and the main conclusion was that the uniqueness and main point of strength would be the comprehensive MENA-EU coverage and this ambitious vision is being further developed. The analysis also pointed out that the network covers two main areas of interest to the region namely SME development and support of vocational training which were gaps in other networks' analysis.

Formalization Process – Group Discussion

Niels Tanderup Kristensen – Deputy Director / Confederation of Danish Industry

Following the similar networks analysis and building on the results, Mr. Kristensen facilitated a group discussion of previously introduced Articles of Association aiming at finalizing the formalizing process, it was agreed that an additional month will be given for further feedback and comments and by then the final version of the document will be endorsed. In the same context a list of potential EU members was introduced and participants voted for priority countries for the Network (full results will be forwarded shortly). Following that, the Network's Value Proposition was discussed and endorsed.

AE Network B2B Platform

Mr. Karim Al Sahi – Managing Partner / KonnectI

Mr. Karim gave an update about the network's B2B Platform, and the progress of engaging companies and sign-ups. Focus is started on UK and UAE, Denmark and Egypt will then follow in order to cover the four countries agreed upon in the first phase. The next phase will cover other EU and MENA countries, so the platform covers both EU and MENA countries as planned. All revenue from the platform will go directly to the Arab-EU network and its members.

International Services Catalogue – Group Work

Ms. Karen Panum Thisted – Consultant / Confederation of Danish Industry

With the aim of developing an International Business Services Catalogue for the Network, a group exercise was facilitated to accumulate potential services that can be offered by member organizations to facilitate the entrance of foreign companies to members' countries. The conducted exercise will feed into the intended catalogue which will constitute a foundation for development of common services of the AE Network and thereby help foreign companies enter the region. The secretariat will accumulate results and provide a draft of the catalogue to be introduced to the group.

Homework: Roundtable Meetings - Introduction

Ms. Karen Panum Thisted – Consultant / Confederation of Danish Industry

Example from Egypt: Women in Business Support Unit / FEI

Ms. Sahar Mounir - ILO Consultant / Women in Business Support Unit /FEI

Afterwards Ms. Thisted explained about the Roundtable meeting to be conducted by members before the next meeting, intending to Improve Policy Advocacy measures based on MENA Benchmark Report main findings. Following that Ms. Mounir demonstrated FEI's initiative aiming at addressing the low female labor participation through providing technical and training support to women entrepreneurs, raise businesswomen's awareness about the added-value of business associations (in particular at local level), Improving participation of women in decision making bodies and business associations in addition to improving economic performance of women in business.

Brain Storming Session: SME Conference Vol. 2

Jordan Chamber of Industry

Following the first SME Regional Conference organized by JCI in 2014, a brain storming session was conducted to brief members about the second conference intended in April 2016. Taking the first conference's outcome into consideration, JCI proposed the conference tackles the "SME Enabling Business Environment" as the main theme.

News from Members: Best Practice Examples

- **UTICA:** Ms. Laila Sassi briefed participants about UTICA's role in the "Tunisian National Dialogue" which has eventually succeeded at defusing the tension prevailing after the revolution, building national unity, and facilitating a way out of the crises. This outstanding case was awarded the "PPD Howards" Award for resilience in the PPD conference in March 2015.
- **Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry:** Ms. Zainab AlA'ali introduced the efforts and initiatives undertaken by the chamber to support SMEs, through linkages, funding, capacity building and networking prospects.
- **Jordan Chamber of Industry:** An update on JCI initiatives and project was demonstrated particularly in the areas of value-added member services, linkages and capacity building.

Next Working Group Meetings:

- ✓ October, 2015: 3rd working Group meeting in Jordan / Details and invitations will be sent by the end of June
- ✓ Early 2016: 1st working group meeting for the year 2016 in Bahrain

Until we meet in Jordan – Deadlines

- ✓ Consolidate the articles of association – to be sent for final feedback shortly and to be endorsed after one week if no changes are proposed
- ✓ Consolidate Value Proposition - final version will be forwarded shortly
- ✓ Consolidate list of EU Organizations to Invite – Voting results will be sent shortly
- ✓ International Services Catalogue – Secretariat will follow-up & prepare 1st draft
- ✓ Roundtable meeting on identified policy issues to get feedback from your members - to be conducted before the end of September in order to present results in October
- ✓ consolidate concept for SME Regional Conference in Jordan in April 2016 – to be presented in October

Points of interest:

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

Yours sincerely



Niels Tanderup Kristensen

Deputy Director

Confederation of Danish Industry

➤ **List of Participants**

Delegate	Organization	Country	Email
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