

# ARAB-EU

*Business Facilitation Network*

**1<sup>st</sup> Working Group Meeting, Abu Dhabi, January 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Participating Delegations:**

**Algeria**

Forum des Chefs des Entreprises (FCE)

**Jordan**

Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI)

**Denmark**

Confederation of Danish Industry (DI)

**Palestine**

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

**Egypt**

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

**Lebanon**

Chamber of Beirut & Mount Lebanon

**GCC**

Federation of GCC Chambers  
Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce &  
Industry

## Summary

*The first working group meeting of 2016 took place in Abu Dhabi, on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of January. The meeting was held in relation to the World Future Energy Summit 2016 as the year's theme for the network's activities was green transformation; the working group meeting was kindly hosted by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.*

*On the first day, participating members attended the World Future Energy Summit 2016, the world's most influential event dedicated to advancing future energy, energy efficiency and clean technology.*

*The AE Network meeting was held on day two and kindly hosted by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry at their premises. The meeting revolved around the topic of green energy and mainly outlining activities of the network for the year through a group exercise. The meeting was concluded with an agreement to work toward driving a more sustainable industrialization in 2016, specifically supporting organizations to use energy more efficiently through adopting ISO 50001.*

## Day One – January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The World Future Energy Summit 2016 was among Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week events which was kicked off by inspiring opening remarks by Dr Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber, the UAE's Minister of State and Chairman of Masdar; Mexico's President, Enrique Pena Nieto; the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. AE network participants got the chance to witness this year's World Future Energy Summit, International Water Summit (IWS), as well as the EcoWaste Exhibition.  
<http://www.worldfutureenergysummit.com/>

## Day Two – January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### Opening Remarks:

#### **Mr. Ahmed Al Sudain – Board Member/ Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

Mr. Al Sudain welcomed guests and was pleased to host the AE Network meeting during the sustainability week which is considered one of the most important events in the UAE. He pointed out that Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry is committed to work for green economy and adapt renewable energy solutions, particularly that almost 70% of energy consumption is taken up by residential and commercial buildings in the Emirate hence there is a real need for adopting energy efficiency solutions.

In that context he pointed out that Masdar city - established in 2006 – has been playing a vital role in this arena and was the reason behind organizing many of the sustainability events in Abu Dhabi. This comes in line with Abu Dhabi's vision for 2030 which aims at adopting renewable energy in order to maintain the energy resources. Mr. Sudain concluded his remarks by pointing out that solar energy sector holds massive opportunities in Abu Dhabi and is by all means very attractive to investments, and

assuring that Abu Dhabi Chamber is strictly committed to promoting sustainable energy solutions.

#### **Other opening remarks were given by**

- **Mr. Niels Tanderup Kristensen (Deputy Director/Confederation of Danish Industry)** who amongst other things stressed that the UAE is an inspiring example for commitment within green growth and that the network will open up the dialogue on how the private sector can lead the change by being responsible and committed to sustainability.
- **Mr. Ziad Homsy (Chairman/Amman Chamber of Industry)** who thanked Abu Dhabi Chamber for hosting the meeting and expressed encouragement by the WFES where everyone attained insight on sustainability solutions, especially within EcoWaste.
- **Mr. Basil Al Awami (Foreign Affairs Manager/Federation of GCC Chambers)** who welcomed all guests and mentioned that Federation of the GCC chambers and the UAE share their vision on working toward sustainable development and are committed to this.
- **Dr. Maher Al Mahrouq (Director General/Jordan Chamber of Industry)** who thanked Abu Dhabi chamber for their hospitality and explained that the network's activities have had a clear role in empowering its members in the sense of sharing experiences and best practices on BMOs' roles and serving their members. He invited Abu Dhabi Chamber to take part in all the network's meetings as he expressed that UAE has a lot to share.

#### **Best Practice Example: how to profit on green transition of your members?**

##### **Developing a revolving fund**

##### **Eng. Ahmed Kamal – Chief Executive Officer/ Environmental Compliance Office and Sustainable Development (ECO SD), Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)**

Eng. Kamal showcased FEI/ECO's experience in benefits from creating member services utilizing the example of their revolving fund, which entitles facilitating members' access to funding when applying energy efficiency measurements and renewable energy solutions. The fund totals to 120 million Egyptian pounds 25% of which is provided by FEI. The lending model encompasses a technical study conducted by FEI to verify the technical aspect of the project and then the credit study is left to the commercial bank to assess the eligibility of the firm requesting the funding. This has proved to be very successful model as more than 300 loans were directed to FEI members so far with no defaults as a result of the pay back mechanism which ensures that the pay back is secured from the return of adopting the energy efficiency solutions aside from the firm's income. Eng. Kamal also explained that the model entitles delivering training on "Green Accounting" for credit officers to ensure that they are aware of and trained to take sustainability aspects into consideration when conducting assessments of the loans' requests.

Eng. Kamal moreover tapped into the importance of creating the culture of regarding green transformation projects as profitable investments with solid business cases of high return on investment, explaining that this culture would result in creating enhanced “feeding industries” contributing to sustainable economic development through creating considerable economic returns both to business owners as well as the economy as a whole. He explained how ECO and FEI have worked extensively to promote the concept of sustainability as a profit generating practice and hence being attractive to private sector investments. He highlighted that this was a key success factor for FEI as a member organization as they were able to achieve the balance between the agendas of the public sector as well as the private sector, to the benefit of both parties. Last but not least, he raised FEI/ECO’s success of being a real moderator of achieving sustainability goals through speaking the “business language” and ensuring that all parties understand that green transformation is profit generating.

A discussion unfolded in which members were particularly interested in knowing the role ECO SD / FEI had in the legislation area and how the federation managed to advocate for supporting policies to execute this initiative. Participants were also very much interested in getting more information about the lending model Eng. Kamal explained and the credit terms and how this model managed to overcome the strict collateral requirements usually required by commercial banks. In this regard Eng. Kamal gave more details on first spreading awareness between banks and industrial firms about green accounting and stated that the success factor was that they managed to change the mind set and get both parties to regard this as a real business case where an investment is made with a profitable return rather than the traditional view of considering this as a grant. A very interesting discussion was carried out on waste management industry and particularly “electronic waste” as Eng. Kamal tapped into this concept and explained that emerging industries are being established around electronic waste and gave details on their experience in this arena.

### **Group Work: AE Network Focus for 2016**

In order to determine the network’s area of focus for 2016, a group exercise was conducted building on the network’s declaration in its last working group meeting to work towards green transformation. Four areas of potential focus were put forward, namely:

1. Cities’ air pollution
2. How to make cities more sustainable
3. Energy efficiency production: driving a more sustainable industrialization
4. Circular economy: recycling for profit

The members were divided into four groups discussing these themes, with the purpose of first finding an important solution within each area and then discuss how the AE-network may work for this solution during 2016. Each group presented their work in plenum and participants voted for area number three “Energy efficiency production: driving a more sustainable industrialization”

All agreed that the topic was the most relevant to the AE-Network mandate as well as their own organizations, it was agreed that working within the framework of energy efficiency production could have tangible results for all members, agreeing to work towards promoting energy management standards (ISO 50001) to achieve that. A draft plan of application would be prepared by the AE Network Secretariat and sent out soon for all members to comment on.

## **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 third meeting group in October the Secretariat provided the final version of the International Service Catalogue. The catalogue presents the services offered by the network members giving a brief overview of the network, its members and the services that each BMO provide to facilitate investment inflows to their own countries. The final version was handed in hard copies and is available on the AE webpage under "publications": [www.ae-network.com](http://www.ae-network.com)

## **Green Tech Incubation in the Gulf: Introducing the Nordic Innovation Hub**

**Mr. Ayoola Brimmo – Technical Advisor / NordOest**

Mr. Brimmo gave a brief background about Nordic Innovation Hub which is managed by NordOest and is financially supported by Nordic Innovation under the Nordic Council of Ministers. Established as an incubator and based in Masdar City, Nordic Innovation Hub acts as a soft landing solution for Nordic clean tech companies (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic) holding the main goal of minimizing the risk of Nordic firms interested in entering UAE's clean tech market. He explained that they offer a comprehensive set of "support activities" to meet the requirements of their clients, starting with financial support in the form of subsidized office space and license accommodation and stretching to cover technical and business support in the form of market research, business development, adaptation of product to fit UAE environment in addition to blogs and workshops. The AE-network members and their member companies can utilize a range of the services offered by the hub, if/when looking at green tech opportunities in the GCC.

## **News & Updates**

### **B2B platforms:**

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Kristensen updated the members about the progress of the B2B platforms explaining that financial cuts have resulted in a current reflection on alternative ways to drive the platforms forward.

### **JCI: SME Regional Conference in May 2016**

Dr. Maher Al Mahrouq updated the participants about the upcoming SMEs Second Regional Conference in May 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2016 which will open the discussion of the role Chambers & Business Associations (CBAs) in unleashed SMEs potential through public-private dialogue. Jordan Chamber of Industry would be glad to see all members attending the event.

**Next Working Group Meeting& Members' Events:**

- ✓ Later in 2016: 2<sup>nd</sup> working group meeting for the year 2016 - Details and invitations will be sent later
- ✓ May 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>: Executive Training Program announced by DI
- ✓ May 23<sup>rd</sup>& 24<sup>th</sup>: JCI 2<sup>nd</sup> SME Regional Conference – the Secretariat will inform you of possible support of your participation
- ✓ November 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>: Business Women Conference in Ajman announced by FGCC

**Until we meet again the Secretariat will:**

- ✓ AE Network secretariat will develop a working plan for the network's activities towards driving a more sustainable industrialization and will be shared with members shortly

**Points of interest:**

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

Yours sincerely



Niels Tanderup Kristensen  
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## List of Participants

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