



Cooperation Techniques

UN-ESCWA launched on 16 February 2009 the technical cooperation network web page, during the meeting it held for the network members at the UN House, Beirut. The site facilitates coordination, communication and sharing points of view on UN-ESCWA services. In addition, the site will serve to identify the priorities of member countries, facilitating by such the implementation of technical cooperation activities and programs.

On the sidelines of the meeting, UN-ESCWA organized a workshop for network members on the preparation of sustainable development programs and projects, in response to the choice of a majority of members. The workshop aimed at building participants' capacities in drawing up sustainable development programs and projects, identifying country priorities and needs in sustainable development planning, and establishing recommendations to enhance the inclusion of sustainable development in project and program planning.

The meeting was attended by concerned focal points,

working on technical cooperation programs in member countries and experts on in the field. The aim of the meeting was to follow-up on the implementation of recommendations issued during the preparatory meeting (Cairo- 28-30 October 2007); and reinforce cooperation and coordination among network members. It also tackled regional advisors' services, UN-ESCWA activities for 2008-2009, and major priorities and programs proposed for 2010-2011.

Recommendations to conclude the meeting were directed at reinforcing coordination among member countries focal points and UN-ESCWA to promote UN-ESCWA activities on the national level on the one hand, and identify country-specific priorities on the other. Recommendations also emphasized the dissemination of information on the technical cooperation network in member countries, and the development of a database for national experts and advisors. ■



UN-ESCWA offers advisory services upon the request of member countries, through a team of regional advisors. Such services involve the implementation of national policies and strategies, as well as development programs and sectoral policies. It also assists them in implementing field projects on the national and regional levels, and exchange successful experiences they can benefit from.

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Are you Aware of AWARENET?

The Arab Integrated Water and Resources Management Network, (AWARENET), is an independent, impartial regional network of training and research institutions, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), government authorities and experts in the field of water, working on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). It works to provide the public with water and sanitation services, protect precious water resources and the environment, and promote socio-economically constructive uses of water by improving the implementation of IWRM concepts in the Arab region. With over 80 leading water institutions in 18 Arab countries for members, AWARENET is endorsed by regional organizations, such as UNEP-ROWA, the German Development Cooperation Agencies (BGR and GTZ) and global networks. The AWARENET secretariat is hosted and run by UN-ESCWA, and the network has national chapters in different Arab countries that coordinate national efforts. ■

Facts and Figures:

Selective Listing of Challenges Facing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Lebanon

In a survey of firms detailed in a study issued by UN-ESCWA in 2001, 32 Lebanese exporters cited the lack of access to information on standards, regulations and customs reporting requirements as an important obstacle to trade within the Arab region market and with other developing markets. This challenge was echoed during the national round table organized by UN-ESCWA in Beirut on 15 December 2006 to discuss industrial policy challenges affecting the competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Lebanon. The round table grouped public and private sector stakeholders who collectively formulated a list of the major constraints

and challenges facing Lebanese SMEs. Apart from issues related to the uncertain political situation being experienced in Lebanon at that time, these included: poor access to credit, the underdeveloped legal and regulatory environment, high production costs, and the difficulty of accessing information on foreign and domestic standards and regulations as well as information on market opportunities and new industrial developments.

This list of challenges is supported by the 2006 spot survey conducted by the SME Support Programme at the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade. The survey covers five industrial sectors (chemicals and

manmade fibres, pulp and paper, rubber and plastics, machinery and equipment, and electrical machinery), which account for 20 per cent of Lebanese merchandise exports, and also covers the media and advertisement service sector. The following table lists the challenges identified by the survey along with their associated severity rankings revealed by the surveys and the round table discussion with national stakeholders, access to information about local and international markets is repeatedly cited as a challenge facing SMEs, including access to information about specific industry information such as standards and regulations. ■

SELECTIVE LISTING OF CHALLENGES FACING SMES IN LEBANON

CHALLENGE	SEVERITY RANK
Macroeconomic stability	3.66 (highest)
Security and political stability	3.64
Cost of electricity	3.12
Cost of financing	2.92
Collateral requirements for financing	2.71
Cost of supplies and raw materials	2.58
Local competition	2.48
Access to information on export markets	2.45
Access to industry-specific information	2.10
Access to information on local markets	2.03
Access to information on procedures and legislation	2.02
Access to financial support services	2.00

Source: Impact of Industrial Policies on the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, UN-ESCWA, 2007.

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