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BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE MARKET INTELLIGENCE UNIT COORDINATOR AT THE A/E BUSINESS COUNCIL

END OF PROJECT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the end-of-project report for the Coaching and Mentoring of the Market Intelligence Unit (MIU) Coordinator at the A/E Business Council conducted during the period from January 10 to June 6, 2011.

The objective of project is to build the capacity of the MIU coordinator at the A/E BC to be able to perform his role more effectively and provide relevant and up-to-date market information services to A/E BC member companies. This will ultimately help enhancing the Unit's role in supporting members in developing local and export markets, and enhancing the A/E BC as a reliable service provider for the architecture and engineering sector in Jordan.

The project follows the development of the MIU Strategic Plan and the hiring of the unit coordinator.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The project started in January 11, 2011 with the project kick-off meeting. The three month originally intended for the implementation of the project stretched to two extra months, ending on June 6, 2011. This was because the MIU Coordinator had to attend several trade promotion activities including two trips abroad for trade mission and trade fair participation, as well as execute tasks related to these activities. Thus, the duration of the project was extended to allow the implementation of all the activities included in the workplan, including the completion of the pilot project on the preparation of a specific market report.

OBJECTIVES

The consultants tailored the coaching sessions to the identified needs of the MIU Coordinator. The program had a targeted skills development approach, designed to address the following objective:

- To improve the MIU Coordinator's performance and effectiveness in line with the MIU objectives and his roles and responsibilities in developing and delivering services to member companies.

APPROACH

The consultants' approach included:

PROGRAMMING PHASE

This phase consisted of:

- Project kick-off meeting with all stakeholders (A/E BC, USAID Jordan Economic Development Program and Al-Jidara) to discuss and agree to the terms of the project as outlined in the specific ToR and define the project objectives.
- The preparation of the project workplan (see Appendix A) establishing the project approach as well as the specific activities, including a customized work breakdown structure specific to the needs, specifying sessions plans, assignments and expected results in terms of skills and knowledge to be acquired.
- Preliminary assessment of the marketing and export marketing knowledge through a baseline questionnaire developed for that purpose and conducted with the MIU coordinator.

- Review the MIU's existing strategic plan, job description, and other relevant documents, materials and tools as well as researched international best practices of similar organizations
- Design the detailed coaching program including coaching materials such as templates, tools and resources database.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

This phase consisted of:

- Conducting sessions of structured one-on-one coaching and training on building the skills and knowledge and advising in areas such as:
 - **Action planning** for the unit (annual planning) and for a project: the organization/ project action plan development process; the formulation of a one-year action plan for the MIU
 - **Strategic marketing and export planning:** training on strategic marketing planning and export planning to help understand what marketing managers do, what decisions they take and what information they need for decision making, and how can MIU support managers and marketing managers (in member companies) in their decision-making related to market/ export development and export promotion.
 - **International market monitoring, research and analysis** and preparing market reports: structured approach to analyzing market attractiveness and selecting markets, macro-environmental analysis of countries (PEST analysis), industry information, monitoring of market access and entry regulations, monitoring of public tenders and other relevant industry and market news, as well as key sources of relevant data and information.
 - **International trading system:** knowledge about the WTO's GATS, understanding how to read countries services schedules and monitoring regulatory aspects of trade in services.
 - **Developing market reports, briefs, profiles:** determining the report/ profile content, designing standard templates, researching the topic and structuring the information according to a prepared outline as well as presenting the results of the market research information in an appropriately designed written document.
 - **Managing the Market Information System at the MIU:** developing systematic market monitoring, collection and analysis of relevant information, building the database of information and resources and managing resources and databases, including developing the MIU website to effectively communicate/ disseminate market information to members.
 - **Managing and organizing collective participation of members in trade fairs and trade missions:** how to plan for participation in trade fairs, how to

select events, what factors need to be considered for members collective participation, managing and budgeting for events.

- **Managing MIU communication and promotion of services:** objectives of communication, ways to effectively communication with members, type of promotion activities
 - **Dealing with situations at workplace:** having clarity of purpose, clearly stated roles and responsibilities, including obtaining management approval on yearly action plans,
 - **Managing members' expectations:** being clear about what the MIU does and does not do by developing a list of services and information products, being credible and transparent pertaining to activities, sharing information, involving all members in the planning process by regular communication, and requesting opinions through surveys.
- Providing ongoing support over email and phone
 - Conducting ongoing evaluation of progress

The consultants engaged in the process of creating awareness and understanding of concepts, processes, methodologies and tools, by:

- Explaining and applying concepts
- Encouraging individual learning and skill development
- Sharing methods, tools, templates, and resources and encouraging their use and application into practice through assignments
- Providing training on aspects related to marketing and export planning and international market research and analysis.
- Conducting focused discussions, reviews of practices
- Supervising and providing timely feedback on tasks and assignments
- Providing guidance and support in conducting structured research and preparing appropriate market report
- Assisting with informational resources to build the resource database at MIU

The consultants used practical assignments, reference material and a pilot project to support the coaching and provided training on marketing and export marketing topics. The assignments helped the MIU Coordinator apply the methodologies and tools into practice, help him stay focused and support the process of learning by doing. Assignments consisted of development of a one-year action plan for the unit, a product/ services list, information

product sheet, market research and the collection of information resources about relevant subjects as well as the preparation of a complete market report.

Consultants provided additional support and feedback between the coaching appointments over the phone and over emails.

CONCLUSIONS

The coaching achieved the following results:

- Enabled learning by doing in a structured process
- Improved specific skills and knowledge in:
 - Preparing organization or project action plans
 - Conducting effective international market research
 - Effective information processing
 - Project management
 - Informational product development
 - Report writing
 - International trade
 - Marketing and export planning
 - Trade mission management and facilitation
- Improved the ability to manage the MIU and projects
- Improved the ability to effectively manage the Market Information System
- Brought about better understanding of the job and about what it expected from the MIU Coordinator
- Helped cope with new responsibilities and specific work-related situations
- Brought about more interest in continuous learning and skills development

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The actual duration of coaching required more time than estimated in the ToR and the initial work-plan. Coaching is generally a longer-term project (compared to training for example) that requires constant involvement and attention of the person coached and interaction with the consultant. Therefore, such projects, if they are to achieve meaningful results must be designed and based on a better estimation of the risks and the time necessary to complete each activity and assignment, including taking into consideration the daily work schedule of the person coached, and the potential distractions that may hinder the implementation of activities along the process.

In order to achieve real change, the consultant used a practical approach by transferring knowledge and tools during training and coaching, discussing every concept and subject raised, and closely supervising the preparation of assignments, especially those related to preparation of market report. This proved to be successful in achieving the results, nevertheless we recognize the need for the Coordinator to continue building knowledge related to the architecture and engineering industry and markets, and familiarize himself more with all relevant sources of information. Given the type of competencies required in this job, particularly those pertaining to technical skills on how to analyze markets, how to understand opportunities as well as how and what type of resources to use and how to present the results of the research, improving skills and knowledge in these areas must be an ongoing activity of the MIU Coordinator.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WORKPLAN FOR MIU COORDINATOR COACHING & MENTORING JAN 12 - MAR 31

Period: Jan 16 - Feb 20

Sessions Topics

Assignments

Preparatory activities

Kick-off meeting

Need assessment of MIU coordinator

prepare baseline questionnaire (knowledge, skills NA)

conduct interview, needs assessment

review existing documents (strategic plan, job description, policies and procedures)

Preparation of this Workplan

Session 1

Topics: Introduction: Discuss topics, explain concepts, review practices

- Scope of coaching
- The MIU's role
- Categories of customers, their needs
- Type of services to be offered by the MIU
- Categories of informational products
- Provision of/access to info products through the website

- Review, design/update members' NA questionnaire
- Review the AP of the MIU Business Plan, use it to formulate the Action Plan for 2011
- Develop a list of services to be offered by the MIU
- Develop a list of information products

Skills: Understanding concepts

Session 2

Topics: Determine members' info & training needs

- Discuss members' NA questionnaire; discuss plan for conducting members' needs assessment

- Complete plan for conducting NA (use visits, survey, focus group)
- Conduct members' NA (info needs, priority markets, categories of members identified)
- Prepare NA report

Skills: Planning, design & conduct needs assessment

Session 3

Topics: Prepare Action Plan for 2011

- Discuss the draft Action Plan for 2011
- Review NA report
- Complete the 2011 Action Plan

Skills: Organizational planning; Report writing

Session 4

Topics: Management of MIS (strategy, structure)

- Defining info gaps, determine info objectives
- Determine sources of information
- Assess information/ publications etc. available at A/E BC; define gaps, determine key sources of info
- Design, start creating the reference database (using the database provided) (accessible, timely, cost efficient, keep updated)
- Learn about macro-economic, trade and business information sources
- Design, build the MIS reference database
- Organize, prioritize resources (criteria: by topic, by market, by regions?)
- Getting familiar with research and information sources
- Keep resource database updated

Skills: MIS management competencies; Information processing skills

Session 5

Topics: Develop portfolio of info products

- Determine information products to be offered
- Complete the product development plan
- Create product development and delivery plan (description, budget, pricing scheme, execution timeframe, delivery time, frequency)
- Create info products standard format (market briefs, customized reports, country/ industry factsheets, newsletters, tender notices)
- Develop standard product templates, forms
- Review product plan and forms

Skills: Tactical planning and product development skills

Period: Feb 21 - Mar 10

Advanced Market Research & Analysis

Session 6

Topics: In-depth market research & analysis - structured process

- Market Research: what it is, why do it, how to do it?
- The right approach to a given problem
- Stages in identifying market potential and opportunities, selecting markets (PEST, the 3-step process, the 5/5 rule)
- Understanding international trade system (WTO/GATS), trade terms
- The Market Research process:
 - determine info objectives
 - determine sources of info
 - collection of data
 - presentation of findings (report structure)
- Review pilot project
- Write a plan for preparation of a market information brief
- Complete a market information pilot project (collecting, analyzing, reporting)
- Create a relevant market access database

Skills: International trade knowledge; Market research; Information processing; Report writing

Period: Mar 11 - Mar 31

Export Marketing and Management

Session 7

Topics: Understanding Export Marketing Strategy

- Marketing and export marketing principles
- Concept of strategic planning, analysis, strategy development

Skills: Marketing and Export Marketing

Session 8

Topics: Planning for Trade Fairs and Trade Missions

- Planning pre-, during-, post event
- Develop standard forms for trade show and trade mission announcement, application, evaluation, end-of-activity report

Skills: managing trade shows and trade missions

Session 9

Topics: Managing Communications, Promotion

- Website, news and tender alert service, inquiries, newsletter
- Promotional methods/tools
- Conduct awareness workshop for members; prepare presentation, materials to distribute

Skills: Communication and Promotional skills

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