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ENRICHING THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES PORTAL WITH LEARNING RESOURCES

Final Report - Confidential

30 December 2009

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USAID JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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COMMUNITIES PORTAL WITH LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE UTILIZED
BY PC MEMBERS

DISCLAIMER:

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1. Introduction

USAID funded Jordan Economic Development Program (SABEQ) supports Jordanian businesses through providing technical assistance that enhances their productivity and the quality of their services. Professional Communities (PC) is a critical SABEQ initiative; it supports knowledge diffusion within targeted sectors through enabling Jordanian professionals to participate in online and in-person activities aimed at improving their technical skills and providing networking opportunities amongst them.

Within the Professional Communities, SABEQ has created an online portal www.jordanpc.org. This serves as a source for a variety of resources (articles, templates, presentations, podcasts, videos, etc.), which its members can access and apply in their own professional domains. In order to enrich the experience of the Professional Communities members, and to continuously add value to the services provided to them, the portal needs regular updates in terms of resources that fulfill the members' needs and provide them with high quality tools that support the continuous improvement quest of their organizations.

1.1 Objectives

The project aimed at capturing 900 quality resources for five main targeted sectors; Human Resources Management (HR), Strategic Management (SM), Industrial as a sub-community under Strategic Management, Trade and Export Development, Public Sector Policy, Service and Performance, and Media Economic Reporters. The resources should be representing a variety of topics and resource types (articles, templates, presentations, podcasts, videos) to enrich the members' experience, help members' retention, and eventually support the efforts to attract new members.

1.2 Document Overview

This report provides an overview of the approach used by the consulting team in capturing resources, discusses the results and findings of the assignment, presents specific recommendations as a reference for upcoming efforts based on learned lessons, and supplies guidelines on how to capture different resources.

Within this report, annexes include:

- Annex 1: SABEQ defined list of topics.
- Annex 2: An updated Partner's list; a final list of partner websites.
- Annex 3: Templates used by the consultants in the project implementation.
- Annex 4: Results folder of the following;
 - Approvals' tracker sheet; a list of websites contacted for partnership and communication log.
 - Resources captured for each targeted sector; a sheet for each sector is provided. Each includes list of resources and analysis. The list presents the resources classified by topic, source, URL address, type, and language and complexity level. It also provides description and tag words for each resource. On the other hand, the analysis provides an insight of the captured resources in terms of topic, type and language coverage.
 - Summary results; a summary overview of resources captured.

2. Approach

The project was carried out in three phases. It started with a preparation phase to set the groundwork for all the coming phases, and then progressed from identifying and capturing a wide range of resources covering key topics of interest to uploading them to the Professional Communities Portal.

The diagram below illustrates the phases of the project implementation followed with a step-by-step breakdown of the activities conducted by the consulting team.



2.1 Preparation:

Through a process walk-through and a number of meetings and discussions with SABEQ Task Manager and PC-portal developers, the consulting team obtained a better understanding of the PC-portal uploading process, and the portal indexing mechanism. Those discussions also resulted in defining focus areas for research. Next, the consulting team developed working templates to be used during the project implementation, and finalized a list of approved partner websites to be used as a reference for the project.

2.1.1 PC-Portal Overview

The consulting team obtained a better understanding of the PC-portal including the uploading process, the indexing mechanism and the processing of the usage rights approval. This covered the waiting time and follow-up policy that is used for usage rights approval processing.

The consulting team was provided with an administrator access to the PC-portal. Uploading of resources by other activities was suspended to avoid duplication of work. A special email address was setup to process usage rights approvals.

2.1.2 Identify Sources of Information

The consulting team capitalized on a working list of partner websites that was developed during the creation phase of the PC-portal. The consulting team reorganized the list to distinguish partner websites, which allowed the PC-portal to use/upload resources from other websites that declined to allow the PC-portal to use/upload resources. Websites were further categorized based on approval permission granted and refusal reason. Partners List is attached in [Annex 2](#).

Additionally, the resources that were available on the PC-portal at the beginning of the project were analyzed to identify the partner websites that were extensively utilized from those that were not

utilized. This assisted the consulting team to focus the search efforts on websites that were not sufficiently utilized up to that point.

2.1.3 Identify Focus Sectors and Topics

Based on the distribution of resources that were available on the PC-portal at the beginning of the project, SABEQ advised the project team on the distribution of the 900 new resources that should be uploaded to the PC-portal by the end of the assignment. The consulting team conducted further analysis on topics coverage and availability and defined the average number of resources for each topic. The consulting team worked on approximating the average calculated number for each topic. Efforts were focused on some topics more than others in trying to balance resources across all topics. Resources' distribution is defined in the table below.

Resources Distribution		
Sectors	Total Number of Targeted Resources*	Average Number of Targeted Resources per keyword
Media Economic Reporters	300	10.7
Strategic Management & Industrial	50	3.9
Human Resources Management	50	1.8
Trade	200	5.7
Public Sector	300	12

**Specified By SABEQ*

2.1.4 Develop Work Templates

The consulting team utilized the understanding of the PC-portal, the indexing mechanism and other requirements to develop working templates to organize and facilitate smooth, correct, consistent and timely implementation of the assignment while ensuring compliance to the set requirements. Those templates included; Approvals' tracker sheet and resources tracker sheets. A usage right request template to communicate with potential partners was developed with the support of SABEQ portal developer and the mail merge capability was utilized to increase efficiency. Please refer to [Annex 3](#) for templates.

2.2 Capturing Resources

With the objective of achieving the targeted number of resources per topic, ensuring diversification in type and language, and providing useful applicable resources to Jordan, the consulting team conducted an extensive search for SABEQ-defined list of topics attached in [Annex 1](#). The research was conducted in two stages, the first focused on identifying resources from under-utilized partner websites and the second stage focused on filling the gap areas that were not sufficiently covered by resources from partner websites or the areas where resources diversification needed enhancement. In this second phase, search on non-partner websites took place and instead of obtaining usage rights approvals for individual resources, the websites were contacted to become partner websites.

2.3 Define Potential Partners

The consulting team started by defining potential list of partners of those websites with a wide range of useful resources that can benefit the professional communities' portal. Related copyrights of the

sources were first checked, and then potential partners were contacted for usage right approval. Responses were tracked in partners' tracking sheet, and partners' list was updated to include newly established partnership and their related usage right conditions.

2.3.1 Search for Resources on Partner Websites

Utilizing the partners list organized during the preparation phase, and USAID owned material provided by SABEQ, the consulting team conducted an extensive research for relevant and quality resources. To avoid resource duplication and ensure that only new resources are uploaded on the PC-portal each captured resource was checked against those already available on the PC-portal. New resources were organized in their corresponding tracking sheet (please refer to [Annex 4](#)) as obtained with brief description explaining when and how it could be used. In addition, the consulting team classified the resource level of difficulty, language, format, and resource type. Resource types were defined in a way that matches the PC-portal categorization. The URL address was also provided to facilitate easy and simple retrieval of information. Resources were mapped to sources and usage right and search/tag words were inserted to describe the resource and enable portal browsing.

2.3.2 Search for Resources on Non-partner Websites

Whenever the resources available on the partner websites were not sufficient to cover a specific area or ensure diversification, the consulting team delved into non-partner websites and existing database of work for useful resources. Instead of contacting non-partner websites for usage rights approvals of individual resources, the websites were contacted to become partner websites, thus maximizing the benefits, by not only fulfilling the requirements of this assignment at hand, but also increasing the partners' list of the professional communities for future reference as well. Resources' owners were contacted to obtain their approval on the use of the resources whenever needed and as guided by the non-partner website.

The consulting team also contacted the Professional Community Advisors at SABEQ and the PC-portal developers for advice on potential sources.

2.4 Uploading Resources to PC-Portal

The uploading of resources started with a final quality check; to ensure that all information needed for uploading are available and complete. The uploading followed SABEQ indexing procedure. The consulting team uploaded the resources to the professional communities' portal. Each resource was uploaded taking into consideration specific requirements of resource owners e.g. mentioning the resource origin, using a hyperlink to the resource website. The consulting team selected some resources to be promoted on the PC-portal home page. Those resources were marked in the resources tracking sheets for SABEQ's attention.

3. Results

3.1 Captured Resources

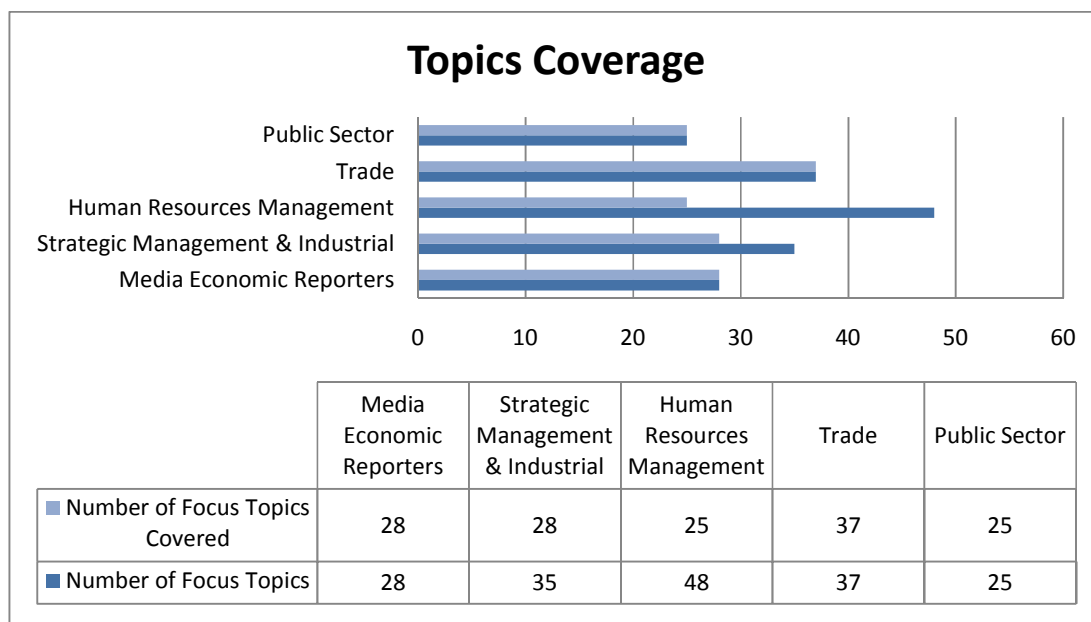
The consulting team identified 930 resources covering the five main sectors; Human Resources Management (HR), Strategic Management (SM), Industrial as a sub-community under Strategic Management, Trade and Export Development, Public Sector Policy, Service and Performance, and Media Economic Reporters. The table below includes the distribution of the resources between the five sectors.

Resources Distribution

Sector	Number of Resources (SABEQ's Target)	Number of Resources (Identified)
Media Economic Reporters	300	305
Strategic Management & Industrial	50	50
Human Resources Management	50	50
Trade	200	200
Public	300	325
Total	900	930

3.1.1 Topic Diversification

Resources identified covered all the topics under Public Sector, Media and Trade. These three sectors are new to the PC-portal and the targeted number of resources was high. For Strategic Management and Human Resources, the targeted number of resources was small which lead to compromise covering all resources for ensuring language and type diversification. This resulted in covering 52-80% of the topics under those sectors. Resources distribution per topic is illustrated in the figure below.



3.1.2 Language Diversification

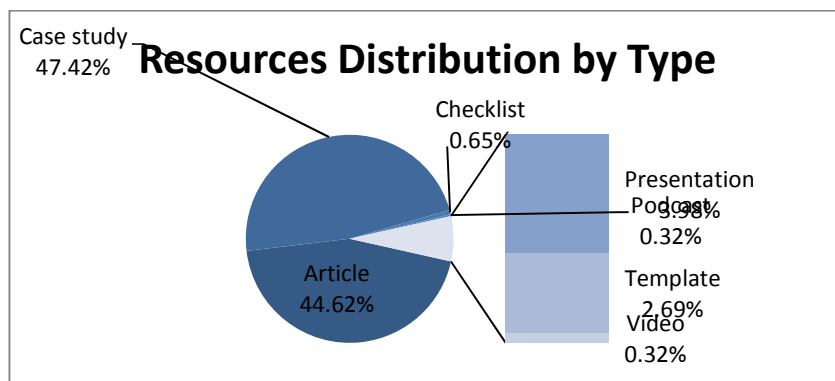
WebPages in Arabic comprise 2% of WebPages worldwide¹, so does the Arabic content. Scarcity in Arabic content and poor quality of Arabic resources on the web resulted in 4% Arabic resources. The table below represents the Arabic resources distribution by sector.

Arabic Resource Distribution by Sector

Sector	Total Number of Resources	Number of Arabic Resources	% of Arabic Resources
Media Economic Reporters	305	4	1%
Strategic Management & Industrial	50	6	12%
Human Resources Management	50	2	4%
Trade	200	4	2%
Public Sector	325	17	5%
Total	930	33	4%

3.1.3 Type Diversification

As the PC-portal indexing mechanism uses restricted resource type classification (article, case study, checklist, podcast, presentation, template, and video); the majority of resources were indexed as articles or case studies. The categories of articles and case studies include many reports, books, concept papers, training material and other publications that could not be classified under other types of classifications. Many of these resources include checklists, templates, tools and illustrations, but cannot be extracted as a standalone resource for copyright restrictions. To overcome these restrictions, the consulting team used an elaborated description to highlight valuable tools in each resource. Resources distribution by type is illustrated in the figure below. Details of type distribution are provided for each sector in its relevant resource tracking sheets attached in [Annex 4-C](#).



Type	Article	Case study	Checklist	Podcast	Presentation	Template	Video	Total
Number of Resources	415	441	6	3	37	25	3	930
Percentage	44.62%	47.42%	0.65%	0.32%	3.98%	2.69%	0.32%	100.00%

¹ Sources: News in Science- Arabic search engine may boost content: <http://www.abc.net.au/science/news/stories/s1623945.htm>

3.2 Partnerships Established

28 websites were identified and contacted for partnership, of which 23 became partner websites of the PC-portal.

A total of 156 partner websites are currently available as sources for the PC-portal. A detailed list is provided in approvals tracker sheet attached in [Annex 4-A](#).

4. Observations and Findings

The following observations and findings were noted by the consulting team throughout this assignment:

- Scarcity of Arabic resources is observed. This is a reflection of the fact that English is the business language, and corresponding to the limited Arabic content on the internet.
- The sectors themselves influence the types of resources available. Professionals working in specific sectors tend to publish information in certain formats. In media and trade articles are commonly used, while case studies are used for public sector publications.
- Quality presentations, templates and checklists are usually available for a fee.
- It is recommended to start by identifying potential partner websites that include a wide range of useful resources on several topics of interest for the professional communities to minimize burden of processing individual usage right approval.
- Quality, language, type, number and topic coverage are competing demands. Striking a balance remains a challenge.
- Websites of quality and comprehensive resources tend to require registration and/or fee.

5. Guidelines

The following guidelines were used by the consulting team to ensure capturing quality resources and proper indexing. Those guidelines were grouped under two areas; capturing resources and obtaining partners' approvals.

5.1 Capturing Resources

- Start by identifying potential partner websites that include a wide range of useful resources on several topics of interest for the professional communities to minimize the approval processing burden.
- Avoid all fee-based websites and those with imposed registration to ensure better user experience of portal.
- Check usage right authorization before you use any of the resources.
- Some websites that require registration may publish useful resources to promote the rest of their content. Make sure that the content is reasonable and comprehensive for the viewer.
- Utilize search engines' advanced search capabilities, advanced search capabilities allow type, language and copyright filtration. Still, validate the copyright condition for each resource before using it to ensure aptness.
- Websites may use other websites as a source of some of their contents. Authorization obtained from the first website does not allow you to use and share material obtained from the original one. Check the URL for assurance.
- Search for all types of available resources under each topic covering one topic at a time. This ensures focus and eliminates redundancy.

- Try different wording for the topic, shuffle the words of the phrase, use synonyms of the words, and topics.
- Utilize search engines' provided tag-words. Search engines usually propose list of most commonly searched topic as you type your own.
- Consider the main sub-fields under each topic and try to locate resources covering those sub-fields.
- Use Wikipedia, Business Dictionary.com, Answers.com or similar websites to get a preliminary understanding of the topic under search, check related topics and links.
- Use the phrase "how to", to locate step by step approach, tools, and templates.
- Use the acronyms like "PPT" to locate presentations.
- Combine the topic and the Type of the resource to locate specific types.
- Always look for useful resources, 'quality' overrides 'quantity' requirements.
- Always obtain the URL address.
- Try to identify more resources as the final number may be reduced based on the owners' approval on the use of the resource.
- Make sure the resource is new and not posted on the PC-portal. Search the entire PC-portal before, rather than a sector.
- Provide a complete resource description once a resource is located as information and reason of selection is still fresh in your mind.
- Arrange the indentified resources under each sector in a tracking sheet.
- Use a unique code as an identifier for each resource. This is important to facilitate the tracking of usage right approval.
- Maintain coding system. Do not delete the resource if usage is rejected. Only mark the resource to avoid confusion.
- Update and maintain the tracking sheets regularly.
- Use your experience to judge the level of the resource. Beginners are those with straight-forward and basic knowledge, advanced are those with elaborate clarifications and equations, and intermediate are those in between.

5.2 Obtaining Partners' Approvals

- Check the copy rights of a potential website partner, if copy rights do not allow the use of the resource, then email the resource website requesting approval.
- Response to approval requests may take time, try to send partner approval requests as early as possible.
- Use reminder emails to follow-up on partner approvals.
- Check the individual resource copy right; if copy rights do not allow the use of the resource, then email the resource owner requesting approval.

6. ANNEXES

6.1 Annex 1 SABEQ defined list of topics

A) Media Economic Reporters Professional Community	B) Strategic Management Professional Community including Industrial	D) Human Resources Management Professional Community	E) Trade Professional Community	F) Public Sector Professional Community
1. Globalization	1. Corporate governance	1. Human Capital Management Strategy: concepts and techniques	1. International Business Strategies	1. Public Policy Development
2. Country competitiveness	2. Business Management best practices	2. Organizational structures: Development techniques, alternatives, and relation to corporate strategic goals.	2. Marketing Research.	2. Public Policy Purpose
3. Economic development	3. Management by Objectives	3. Functions analysis	3. Business Environment scanning and analysis techniques.	3. Policy Makers
4. Privatization	4. Management by Results	4. Job descriptions	4. Marketing Strategies.	4. Regulators
5. Effective dialogue	5. Middle management approach	5. Workforce planning.	5. Marketing management	5. Policy Options
6. Regulatory reform	6. Business Ethics	6. Recruitment and selection of employees.	6. Marketing strategy implementation and evaluation.	6. Policy Cost
7. Social responsibility	7. Corporate Social Responsibility	7. Best interviewing techniques.	7. Business Development	7. Policy Benefits
8. Public-Private Partnership	8. Strategic planning	8. Employment tests	8. Sales management	8. Regulatory reform
9. Domestic and Foreign Direct Investment	9. Feasibility study	9. Psychometric tests	9. Market segmentation	9. Stock Regulations of
10. Risk management	10. Business planning	10. Job classification and grading.	10. Competition analysis	10. Flow Regulations of
11. Inflation	11. Strategy implementation and tracking	11. Orientation program for new recruits.	11. Market entry requirements (for USA, Europe, GCC, MENA, Far East)	11. Quality Regulations of
12. Loans and budget deficit	12. Obstacles to strategy implementation	12. Employee mentoring methodology.	12. Market entry strategic options	12. Regulatory Cost
13. Doing Business Indicators	13. S.M.A.R.T goals	13. Competency based training and leadership development.	13. Marketing Mix	13. Regulatory Risk
14. International economic indicators	14. PEEST Analysis	14. Career path planning	14. Marketing in services industry.	14. Customer Service in the public sector
15. Analysis of financial and economic reports	15. SWOT Analysis	15. Information and knowledge sharing policy.	15. Promotional mix.	15. Customer Satisfaction
16. Market trends	16. Action planning	16. Personnel transaction support (day-to-day HR related tasks, i.e. personnel functions).	16. New Product Development	16. Customers' needs identification

17. Economic transformation	17. Stakeholders Analysis	17. Compensation management.	17. Pricing techniques.	17. Customer Service Excellence
18. Local economic development	18. Financial management and budgeting	18. Salary scales.	18. Distribution channels	18. Incentive plans
19. Regional and local issues	19. Total Quality Management	19. Salary Increment template	19. Branding	19. Incentive Schemes
20. International trade agreements	20. Performance Management	20. Employees Motivation and Incentives schemes.	20. Effective Positioning	20. Public Service Delivery
21. Regional trade agreements	21. Balanced Scorecard	21. Employees retention techniques	21. Competitive Advantage	21. Empowerment
22. Trade statistics	22. Six sigma	22. Employee evaluation tools	22. Negotiation Skills and Techniques	22. Public Service Delivery Case Studies
23. World Trade Organization Agreements/Rules	23. Business Intelligence – Business Information Systems and strategies	23. HR Performance Management Systems and Techniques and the linkages to the overall corporate strategic goals.	23. E-marketing	23. Civil Servants Incentives Case Studied
24. Investigation and news verification	24. Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP)	24. Employee goal setting procedures (career development and professional goals).	24. Innovative Marketing Techniques.	24. Excellence Models in the public sector
25. News writing – according to media type	25. Monitoring & Evaluation techniques	25. Employee Appraisal procedure	25. Marketing ethics.	25. Public Policy Advocacy.
26. Advocacy skills	26. Setting performance targets	26. Competency development.	26. Export development strategies and planning	
27. Journalism Ethics	27. Change management	27. Authority matrix	27. Export marketing strategies	
28. Journalists' rights and obligations	28. Conflict management	28. Communication skills	28. Export Management	
	29. Customer Service	29. Leadership Development	29. Strategic Alliances.	
	30. Disclosure agreements	30. Employee empowerment	30. Own Label	
	31. Sector leadership	31. Employee engagement	31. Private Label	
	32. Empowering leadership	32. Employee safety elements	32. Export Challenges	
	33. Time management	33. Employee satisfaction	33. Export documentation	
	34. Excellence models and the continuous improvement culture	34. Employee turnover	34. Export procedures	
	35. Operations Management	35. Employee welfare	35. Export Readiness Assessment	
	36. Lean manufacturing	36. Flexible working hours	36. Free Trade Agreements (Jordanian Context)	
	37. Just in Time Concepts	37. Jordan's labor law	37. Importing procedures	
	38. Business Process Re-engineering	38. Emotional Intelligence	38. International marketing	

39.	Quality Assurance and Control	39.	Talent Management		
40.	Production Planning and Control	40.	Succession Planning		
41.	Facilities Planning	41.	Employees Turnover		
42.	Product Design	42.	Turnover calculator		
43.	Supply Chain Management	43.	Role profile		
44.	Project management	44.	Team building		
45.	Process Planning and Control	45.	Training budget		
46.	Workflow analysis and documentation - process charts	46.	Competency based training needs assessment.		
47.	Standard Operating Procedures	47.	Employee training and development plans		
		48.	Measuring return on investment in training		
		49.	Women Participation		
		50.	Workplace dispute resolution		
		51.	Workplace diversity		
		52.	Workplace ethics		
		53.	Workplace simulations		

6.2 Annex 2: An Updated Partner's List; a Final List of Partner Websites

6.3 Annex 3: Templates Used by the Consultants in the Project Implementation.

6.4 Annex 4: Results Folder (Approvals' Tracker Sheet, Resources Captured for Each Targeted Sector, Summary Overview of Resources Captured)

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