



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# EXPORT COACHING PROGRAM FOR FOOD MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

END OF PROJECT REPORT

May 2011

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Adnan Ziadat and Anna Maria Salameh

# **EXPORT COACHING PROGRAM FOR FOOD MANUFACTURING COMPANIES**

END OF PROJECT REPORT

USAID JORDAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CONTRACT NUMBER: 278-C-00-06-00332-00

DELOITTE CONSULTING LLP

USAID/JORDAN

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

MAY 2011

AUTHOR: ADNAN ZIADAT, ANNA MARIA SALAMEH

DELIVERABLE NO.: 5.01.02

**DISCLAIMER:**

*The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.*

# CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION ..... 1**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY ..... 2**

    Phase 1: Identification, evaluation and selection of companies with the highest export potential.....2

    Phase 2: Export Marketing and Management Training and Coaching .....4

    Follow-up Coaching .....5

**CONCLUSIONS ..... 6**

    A. Positive results.....6

    B. CHALLENGES AND Lessons Learned .....6

# INTRODUCTION

This document is the end-of-project report for the Export Coaching Program that included Jordanian food manufacturing companies. Competence Management Consulting implemented the project during the period from January 10, 2010 to April 30, 2011.

The project's primary goal was to assist Jordanian food manufacturing companies in successfully entering export markets. The specific objectives of the program were:

- To improve the export marketing and management skills as well as the knowledge of the selected companies, and
- To help participating companies develop their own Export Marketing Plans (EMP) for the target markets.

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Export Coaching Program used a practical approach to export capacity building comprising two distinct phases:

- Phase One: Selection of companies by conducting export readiness assessments (ERAs)
- Phase Two: export marketing and management training and coaching aimed at preparing the company's own Export Marketing Plan (EMP)

## PHASE 1: IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF COMPANIES WITH THE HIGHEST EXPORT POTENTIAL

The ECP's first phase was conducted between March and May 2010, during which the consultants implemented the following:

- 1) Assisted JEA in the program's promotion by conducting an **information session** for potential participants.
- 2) Conducted **export readiness assessments (ERA)** of the applicants. Based on the applications submitted to JEA, the consultants conducted export readiness assessments of the companies that applied to the program.

The ERAs consisted of visits to the companies and meetings with management and key personnel to assess the companies' capacity and competencies with respect to exporting to the US market<sup>1</sup>. The assessments were conducted using the ERA Questionnaire – an in-depth evaluation tool developed by consultants to assess the company's key functions as well as the capabilities to develop and maintain sustainable export operations, and which was adapted to the specific characteristics of the food sector. The ERA questions concentrated on key aspects of business, without which successful exporting cannot be maintained:

- a) *Company infrastructure*: management and marketing skills, motivation and commitment to exporting as well as systems and procedures required to manage exports effectively and efficiently.
- b) *Operations, process and service quality and efficiency*: aspects related to product range and quality, inputs-processes-outputs, quality assurance and control systems, compliance with market access requirements, competitive advantage, logistics/ after sales service and promotional/ communication materials and activities.
- c) *Technology, human, financial and informational resources* available to manage and operate effectively and efficiently.

---

<sup>1</sup> The initial target for the program was the US market. However, this changed at a later stage and the target market became the Gulf region.

- 3) **Selected the companies with export potential.** The evaluation and selection of companies was conducted on the basis of the ERA, using a scorecard developed for that purpose. All five companies assessed were deemed eligible to participate in the program. The selected companies were:

- Al Zyoud Olive Oil Mill
- Alliance Chocolate Manufacturing Co.
- Al Rudinee Company Ltd.
- Shehadeh Twal Farms
- Subhi Jabri & Sons Co.

**Additional ERA:** January 2011

After attending the first two workshops, Subhi Jabri & Sons Co. and Alliance Chocolate Manufacturing Co. withdrew from the program for financial reasons.

As a result, the program was delayed until new applicants were found. In terms of the target market, the decision was made to shift the focus from the United States to the Gulf region in order to allow more companies to join, including those that manufacture processed meat, which is prohibited from entering the United States, the European Union, and other markets. The decision was also based on the belief that given the similarities in the market, the Gulf market would be more attractive for Jordanian food products and companies would be better able to compete.

Based on two new applications received late in December 2010, the consultants conducted two ERAs during January 2011, with the following companies:

- Quality Food Co.
- Arabian Trade & Food Industries Co. (Al Wadi)

Both companies were approved and the program resumed on January 13, 2011, as detailed below.

## PHASE 2: EXPORT MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND COACHING

The export training and coaching phase initially began in May, 2010 with the five companies selected during the first ERA phase (March-May 2010). The consultants conducted the first two workshops, after which the program was put on hold until January 2011, as explained above. The workshops conducted in May, 2010 were:

- **Workshop 1: “Marketing Planning and Getting Ready for Exports”, May 22, 2010.**
- **Workshop 2: “The Export Market Audit for the US Market” , May 29, 2010.**

The consultant’s work included **preparation of presentation slides and support materials pertaining to market research on the United States market**. It included research for relevant data and information for PEST analysis, demographic analysis, specific market access requirements regarding exports on food products to the US, as well as trends and characteristics of the US food market, trade channels structure, an relevant information resources for US market research. The consultants also held several **coaching sessions** to assist companies with market research that focused on the United States.

After a delay of six months, the training and coaching program resumed in January 2011. To bring the newly qualified companies up to the level of the first group, the consultants conducted with them the first workshop on **“Marketing Planning and Getting Ready for Exports” (Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>)**. Following this, the consultants delivered the four other workshops, with all five companies, as follows:

- **Workshop 2: “Export Market Audit”, January 23<sup>rd</sup>**
- **Workshop 3: “ Company Audit” , February 6<sup>th</sup>**
- **Workshop 4: “Market Entry Strategy”, February 13<sup>th</sup>**
- **Workshop 5: “Successful Participation in Trade Fairs”, February 17<sup>th</sup>**

One to three participants from each company attended the workshops. Tools used in training:

- Presentation slides
- The Export Manual
- The EMP Workbook, which contains an Outline for the EMP and Worksheets to guide participants through the process of writing the EMP
- A complete support package including exercise sheets, templates, forms, checklists, tools, case studies and reference links to specific market information relevant to the topics targeted for research

To prepare the presentation slides and supporting materials, consultants conducted extensive research about the food industry and the Middle Eastern markets of relevant food products in order to understand industry and market trends and the specific market access and entry requirements and to adapt the program according to the sector needs.

During the workshops participants were given assignments related to the preparation of the EMP. However, due to the limited time allocated for the program by the organizers, the

companies were not able to complete the assignments between the workshops. Moreover, most of the individual coaching sessions designed to discuss the assignments and guide the participants in the preparation of the Export Marketing Plan could not be held during the sessions and were postponed for the period after the workshops.

Overall, consultants held four coaching sessions with each of Al Rudinee Company and Shehadeh Twal Farms, and one coaching session with each of Quality Food and Al Zyoud. In addition, consultants answered participants' questions via the phone and email.

The coaching concentrated mostly on conducting effective market research and company audit, including:

- Guiding participants on how to conduct structured market research, how to collect and analyze relevant data, and how to present the information obtained
- Providing additional information resources
- Advising on how to evaluate market opportunities and how to understand market access requirements and comply with market regulations.
- How to conduct a meaningful audit of the company and identify core competencies, gaps and how to prioritize issues requiring upgrading.

## **FOLLOW-UP COACHING**

During the end of January and end of April 2011, the consultants made several attempts (through emails and phone calls) to bring companies to the coaching sessions, thus trying to accelerate the pace of the EMP preparations and the program completion. However, none of the companies responded in a constructive way, most citing various reasons for delays in completing assignments (Al Rudinee, Shehadeh Twal Farms, Quality Food and Al Zyoud), while Arabian Trade & Food Industries Co. not responding at all.



# CONCLUSIONS

## A. POSITIVE RESULTS

The ECP helped achieve the following results:

1. Participants learned international marketing concepts and improved their export marketing and management knowledge and skills to help them plan for successful export operations.
2. Five companies have completed the training workshops and gained the knowledge and tools to conduct structured export market research and analysis, company audit, and design market entry strategies.
3. The program changed participants' mindset in dealing with export development and promotion and they understood the importance of proper planning for exports.

## B. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

A number of factors have negatively affected the program and the ability to achieve all its objectives:

1. Not enough commitment to the program by top management: With the exception of Quality Food, the other companies' top management did not show enough or any commitment to the program and the persons who attended were not at the professional qualification and English language qualifications expected and declared in their applications.

Example is Arabian Trade & Food Industries Co., which was represented by two marketing and business development personnel who showed a relatively passive attitude, no engagement, apparent lack of motivation and time to dedicate for research and work on assignments. After the second workshop, only one of the two people continued to attend, but he resigned immediately after the end of the program).

2. Al Zyoud Olive Oil Mill: The person who committed to the program during the export readiness assessment was absent from all but the last of the workshops, the company being represented by a different person each time, with poor English language skills to stay actively engaged or understand the training topics.
3. The time dedicated by JEA for conducting the five workshops during Jan - Feb. 2011 was very limited<sup>2</sup> to allow for proper completion of any work on the assignments, causing momentum built during the workshops to be lost, which negatively affected the capabilities of participants to complete the aforementioned assignments and participate in coaching sessions.

Certain assignments such as market research and conducting a company audit require weeks that were not available to the participants, which affected the entire

---

<sup>2</sup> After resuming the program in January 2011, the contractor (JEA) requested that the consultants finish the training part of the program – initially designed to be implemented within two-three months – before February 26, citing a request from SABEQ to complete the program by the given date. The consultants made a written statement explaining that the

project due to coaching being linked to completed assignments. In other words, because the assignments were not completed, coaching was not entirely possible, thus obstructing future phases.

4. The capabilities of the participants were not to the level required to be able to carry out the activities and prepare the assignments, so the consultants needed much more time to explain, advise, and guide them.
5. It is important that JEA clearly states the conditions and requirements for participation right at the start. The application procedures require that the companies sign a letter of commitment, which includes the full reimbursement of the fees in case the company does not respect its commitments. To our knowledge, this was not enforced. In addition, one factor that kept companies motivated in similar programs was the fact that they were taken to a group trade mission upon the completion of their export plan. In this case, the trade mission was planned to take place before the end of the program.
6. It is important that the JEA compiles, analyzes and shares with the consultants the results of the evaluation conducted by the participants so that the consultants can better assess the quality of the program and consider aspects that need to be improved.

USAID Jordan Economic Development Program  
Salem Center, Sequleyah Street  
Al Rabieh, Amman  
Phone: +962 6 550 3050  
Fax: +962 6 550 3069  
Web address: <http://www.sabeg-jordan.org>