

MCA - Jordan Consultative Process

Work plan

Goal

Ensure broad awareness, buy-in and commitment to the development and implementation of a Compact agreement between the Government of Jordan (GOJ) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

Objectives

This process is intended to serve as a way for the Government of Jordan, through its MCA-Jordan unit, to do the following:

1. Gather data, information and insights from relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, NGOs and civil society organizations, and local communities, in ways that meaningfully inform the choice, design and implementation of projects in the overall Compact program; and
2. Provide information about ways in which key stakeholders, including potential beneficiaries, grassroots organizations, and decision makers, can participate and engage in the various projects in the overall Compact program.

Expected outcomes

MCA-Jordan will employ public participation and consultation throughout the process of developing its proposal for MCC funding, as well later periods of project refinement, negotiation and eventual implementation. As a result of the consultative process, MCA-Jordan expects to be able to:

- Better identify, assess and prioritize needs and challenges related to economic growth and poverty alleviation in Jordan;
- Strengthen partnership with citizens, civil society organizations and NGOs, and the private sector at the national, regional and local levels, and create opportunities for them to provide meaningful input on the choice, design and implementation of projects;
- Improve proposed projects by ensuring the best possible relationship to public needs and priorities and by incorporating local knowledge in project design and implementation;
- Ensure greater transparency and accountability in the development and implementation of projects by creating bridges for two-way communication between beneficiaries, other stakeholders and the GOJ; and

- Encourage broad stakeholder involvement and emphasize the principle of local ownership of projects.

The information-gathering purposes of the Consultative Process are for MCA-Jordan to get the information it needs regarding the potential economic and poverty impacts of potential Compact components, and to make decisions on how best to maximize those impacts.

Background

Various participatory approaches have been applied to the development of national strategies in Jordan. In recent years, these have included the Jordanian Family Strategy, the National Poverty Alleviation Strategy, and the Youth Strategy, among others. Typically, the government has reached out to a number of civil society organizations and NGOs in developing these strategies. While the efforts have been fairly broad, participants have commented that ongoing follow up has not always been strong and that subsequent information about how their input was utilized has often been lacking.

Jordan's National Agenda stands out as one of the most comprehensive strategic initiatives. To lead development of the National Agenda, King Abdullah II appointed a steering committee of 27 members from government, civil society, the private sector, media, Parliament and the political parties [in 2005] to debate and define the eight pillars at the center of the strategy. For each pillar, this steering committee appointed a working group with a chair, deputy chair and some 30 members to further identify problems and develop solutions, ensuring that each group was gender balanced and had a majority of representatives from the private sector. Over a period of five months, members of each working group met regularly to debate and discuss key issues, and shared their findings with a wider group of national and international experts and other stakeholders. Each working group then developed a summary of findings and a clear action plan to discuss with the steering committee for final approval. The working groups were supported in their work by the technical staff at the Government Performance Directorate (GPD) and by Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH), which was contracted to provide consultancy work.

The National Agenda working groups were formed only for a specific purpose and cannot be revived for the MCA-Jordan consultative process. However, MCA-Jordan intends to build on their widely regarded findings by comparing National Agenda priorities, in conjunction with MCA-Jordan's own findings from the Constraints Analysis and Sector Analysis.

Also worth noting is the GOJ's recent experience with participatory processes and public consultation in the Local Governance Development Project. The project, funded through the MCC Threshold Program and administered by USAID, is working to increase the level of citizen participation and civic awareness in nine target municipalities throughout Jordan. Within the last few months of 2007 and the early months of 2008, the project began to bring

together municipal officials, community leaders and civil society organizations for a series of structured conversations to identify needs, prioritize local development projects and develop action plans. An international contractor, ARD, is running the structured conversations using its advanced participatory method (APM). Among its other advantages this approach ensures sustainability in feedback loops, as the end of each workshop a committee is selected by the participants to follow up on implementation of the projects submitted by each group.

The MCA-Jordan consultative process aims to build upon the “lessons learned” from these previous experiences with participatory processes and public consultations. In particular, MCA-Jordan aims to:

1. Create more ways for average citizens to provide feedback, including such typically marginalized groups as women, the poor, and citizens outside the capital city, Amman by holding national workshops in all 12 governorates to reach all societal groups.
2. Expand opportunities for civil society participation; whether during workshops or in the later stages with focused groups.
3. Develop stronger feedback loops and communication bridges to help address the feeling that “the government asks my opinion but then never follows up.” By providing information on updates on MCA-Jordan’s website, and mca-jordan’s e-mail, also different promotional and informative material, in addition to selected follow up committees.
4. Taking into account lessons learned, listening to all involving societal groups, in assessing current situations, and identifying challenges that hinders economic growth.

Overview: The MCA-Jordan Consultative Process

Principles of Consultation

MCA- Jordan believes that its objectives can best be served by a consultative process that adheres to the following principles:

- **Representation.** Every effort will be made to ensure participation from individuals and groups who are representative of Jordanian society and who are most relevant to the issues and projects under discussion, including youth, women, the poor and other groups that are typically marginalized or under-represented;
- **Advance Information.** Participants in the consultative process should have access to relevant documents and other information with sufficient time prior to meetings, in order to allow for informed and thoughtful feedback;
- **Accessibility.** MCA-Jordan should make information on the consultative process and the proposal development process available as broadly as possible to citizens, civil society

organizations and NGOs, and the private sector through its website and other means, and should provide a means for such stakeholders to share feedback directly with MCA-Jordan;

- **Communication.** The consultative process should be based on two-way communication, so that each event or interaction is structured to provide participants with meaningful information as well as to solicit their opinions and insights, and communication should be ongoing, so that participants know how their contributions influence later stages in the proposal development process;
- **Acknowledgement.** The full range of views expressed during consultation will be acknowledged and attention drawn to areas of agreement and disagreement, and the results of public consultation will be weighed carefully together with other evidence and considerations;
- **Transparency.** Decisions in the proposal development process should be taken in a manner that is clear, is adequately explained to stakeholders, and is based on evidence.

Participants and Stakeholders in Consultation

To the broadest extent possible, MCA-Jordan seeks to reach the people of Jordan through its consultative process. Direct communication with the entire population is, of course, not possible, given the scope of this consultative process, so MCA-Jordan will make every effort to reach individuals, groups and organizations that are broadly representative of Jordanian society as a whole. These include:

- National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Civil society organizations and voluntary organizations
- Business owners and private sector organizations
- Labor unions and workers
- Local and regional elected officials and administrators
- Representatives of local communities and neighborhoods
- Academics and representatives of universities
- International donors and international organizations
- Groups of citizens defined by such common factors as age, gender, and disability.

MCA-Jordan will take special care to ensure the participation of groups that are traditionally marginalized or under-represented in Jordanian society such as women and youth, in accordance with the MCC Gender Policy [and any relevant GOJ policy].

Methods and strategies of Consultation

Below are primary strategies for communicating the mission, objectives and projects of MCA-Jordan. Each strategy refers to target audiences and outreach activities. For this purpose, “engage” refers to in-depth efforts to have an interactive dialogue with the audience to meet MCA-Jordan’s mission; “educate” is a two-way process whereby MCA-Jordan and its audience to listen and learn from each other; and “inform” is largely one-way communication from MCA-Jordan to its audiences.

Presentations by MCA-Jordan Staff to peer groups (Engage)

Audience: Business owners and private sector organizations, Academics and representatives of universities, National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Civil society organizations and voluntary organizations

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Community Outreach Coordinator, MCA-Jordan team members

- targeted roundtable meetings with NGOs, beneficiary groups, and unions;
- sector-based focus groups;
- meetings with government entities;

Presentations by MCA-Jordan Staff to broad community (Engage)

Audience: Neighborhood and business associations, community and religious groups, advocacy and activist groups, governor office, youth and women groups

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Community Outreach Coordinator, MCA-Jordan team members

- national “town hall” style workshops;
- conventional customer research methods such as surveys, focus groups, discussions and meetings in the community;

One-on-one conversations (Engage)

Audience: government agencies, academics, NGO’s and other donor agencies as applicable

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Director and Staff members

- In some cases, presentations are not appropriate venues to share information. MCA-Jordan staff should cultivate productive relationships with governmental personnel, academics, and other NGO’s and donor agencies by meeting one-on-one at regular intervals or at key milestones to engage in an ongoing dialogue. This will help to track emerging issues and to communicate MCA-Jordan work.

Information booth at community fairs and festivals (Educate)

Audience: General public

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Community Outreach Coordinator, with the support of the MCA team members and community councils

- MCA-Jordan should host an informational table at well-attended fairs and festivals throughout the city to educate residents and hear from them.

Written and Electronic outreach materials: (Inform)

Audience: All

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Community Outreach Coordinator

- TV, radio, printed media and press releases; (these are channels of communication where public can comment on any information provided by MCA-Jordan.)
- E-forums and online discussion groups or surveys
- Text for all materials should be written to be understood by most people with clear language. Avoiding jargon, acronyms and multi-syllable technical words hinders understanding by some readers and people.
- Create a one page fact sheet on MCA-Jordan to be used as a “leave behind” after a community presentation or meeting. Information currently on the web site and in the quarterly report could be used for this purpose. The fact sheet should list the top economic constraints and the projects proposed by MCA-Jordan. Later during the process a brief updates on the projects could be included as well.
- Develop and update the MCA-Jordan web site to become a useful tool. The site needs regular updates to the calendar and public meetings sections so that every meeting is listed far enough in advance for the public to attend. Dedicated MCA-Jordan staff should be assigned to this task.
- Branding: Creating a unique brand guarantees a clear solid identity for the project. Although, this might come on a later stage, nevertheless, some documents are better produced with a unified layout by the MCA team, such as reports, press releases, tables, agendas, minutes of meeting...

Improve distribution of outreach materials (Inform)

Audience: All

Task lead: MCA-Jordan Community Outreach Coordinator

- MCA-Jordan brochures and posters should be distributed to a wider range of community locations with an emphasis broader than government offices. Community gathering places such as mosques, churches, community centers, schools, and coffee houses in target neighborhoods should be considered.

Phases of Consultation

The MCA-Jordan consultative process will involve a number of overlapping phases. Broadly speaking, these will include the following:

Phase I.I: Information. In early parts of the process, MCA-Jordan will communicate with key stakeholders in Jordanian society to raise awareness of the various steps and requirements that characterize MCC's proposal development process. MCA-Jordan will develop a public website that provides basic information on the proposal development process, explains the opportunities for citizens, civil society organizations and NGOs and the private sector to participate, and includes contact information for the MCA-Jordan unit. MCA-Jordan may also hold meetings with key stakeholders or other events to raise awareness of the proposal development process.

Phase I.II: Problem Identification. MCA-Jordan will conduct an analysis of Jordan's economy using the Constraints Analysis (CA) and Sector Analysis (SA), two tools designed to highlight impediments to economic growth and business expansion. As this analysis returns preliminary results, MCA-Jordan will reach out to experts for "peer group" feedback on its draft reports and initial findings.

Later, following the conclusion of the Constraints Analysis and the Sector Analysis, public consultations will enter a broad, participatory phase. MCA-Jordan will arrange a series of public meetings to test its conclusions, to provide opportunities for citizens, civil society organizations and NGOs, and the private sector to provide additional insights, to and gather more information about ways in which economic challenges impact the lives of Jordan's citizens, including poor, under-represented and traditionally marginalized groups.

During this phase, MCA-Jordan will hold two series of consultations in parallel: first, targeted roundtable discussions with national civil society organizations and NGOs, business leaders, international donors, and other organized groups in Amman; the other, 12 of larger "town hall" style meetings with local citizens, small business owners, grassroots organizations, and elected officials in governorates outside of Amman. MCA-Jordan will share the conclusions of the CA and SA in several forms, including brief summaries in letters of invitation to the public events, fact sheets for participants, and technical power point presentations, in addition to making information available for public comment on its website. It will also collect feedback in a standardized format, so that results from various meetings can be systematically compared, and will develop mechanisms by which participants in the various meetings can be kept informed about the ways in which their feedback and suggestions shape later stages of the proposal development process.

Phase II: Project Design. Following the second phase of consultations, MCA-Jordan will consolidate insights on the identification of problems and begin developing “project concepts” to propose for MCC funding. At an early stage, MCA-Jordan will consult these project concept ideas with potential beneficiaries, representatives from civil society organizations and NGOs, the private sector, local elected officials and other relevant groups in order to solicit their feedback and incorporate their suggestions in ways that strengthen the impact and likely success of the project concepts. The groups consulted will likely be smaller and more targeted than those during the second phase of consultation. However, MCA-Jordan will maintain contact with the broader range of participants in the second phase via email and information posted to the website. Furthermore, based on the selected sector/sectors for proposed projects, an advisory group of related stakeholders will be established to provide feedback and share information with MCA-Jordan and government working group on compact development process.

Phase II: Project Design – On going consultation: Once project concepts are developed and submitted to MCC, MCA-Jordan will continue to manage public consultations on an ongoing basis. These will involve close communication and coordination with key stakeholders affected by proposed projects, including direct communication with intended beneficiaries in order to review and refine project concepts along the way. MCA-Jordan will rely heavily on the website as a tool for disseminating information, and may work closely with a handful of civil society organizations and NGOs that can help to keep their networks of supporters and constituents well informed.

Phase III Mobilization and Start up: Once the Compact Agreement is signed, the consultative process hence focuses on publicly providing information behind government and MCC decisions, answering questions such as: How have feasibility or cost studies affected the negotiated agreement, and publicizing the comparative costs and benefits of various proposals (in media interviews, in op-ed pieces, in public speeches or statements, during consultation meetings, in testimony before legislatures, on an MCA website). It is essential for this phase to describe the outcomes people can expect wither positive and negative. Furthermore, contact information for MCA entity, and channels of communication should be exposed to public.

Phase IV In-Country Implementation:

The communication and transparency mechanisms established during the mobilization phase are used for three purposes:

- To provide intended beneficiaries with the information needed to encourage and enable them to participate in Compact programs;
- To gather information from beneficiaries and stakeholders about the impact and effectiveness of Compact components (with an eye to correcting problems and scaling up positive outcomes); and

- To provide interested stakeholders and the general public with information about the progress and impact of the Compact as it is implemented.

Governance of Consultations

Steering Committee

Composition of SC

In order to assure the involvement of the lead institutions involved in economic growth and poverty alleviation, governance of the implementation of the program should be clearly established. Therefore, a national steering committee was composed of a small group of ministers, chaired by H.E. the Prime Minister.

Members of the steering committee are: Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Minister of Finance, Minister of Water, Minister of Trade, Secretary General for the Jordanian National Women Commission, and H.E. Mrs. Tamam El-Ghoul, Director of MCA-Jordan.

Purpose/mission of SC

The national steering committee will be the only official decision-making body for the program and will supervise the distribution of tasks and project implementation among the programs in the field of poverty alleviation through economic growth, consistent with the requirements of MCC.

Establishing an Advisory Group

This group should be formalized with a set number of members and calendar of meetings. This group could possibly grow into advisory committee as part of the AE or members of this group may be selected to serve on the board of directors for the AE

Advisory Group TOR

The general principles for establishing this group include:

1. Periodic updates of Compact progress to stakeholders with opportunity to provide feedback.
2. Ensure that a wider perspective of stakeholders in the selected sector/s is considered in the selection of projects and during project design/refinement.

3. Review the draft concept paper in terms of structure, list of projects, program concept, and the level of coordination needed between different public and private institutions to successfully implement the projects
4. This is not intended to be an authoritative body but rather a means for MCA-Jordan and the government working group to share information and receive valuable feedback.

Advisory Group Members

- Related Ministries
- Donor Agencies
- Academic Experts
- Private Sector (industrial and service sectors)
- Civil Society Groups (including representative for gender issues)
- Additional members as projects become better defined (regional, sector, etc.)

Frequency of and timeline for meetings:

1. Regular basis to ensure ongoing consultation
 - Monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly
2. Key milestones to present developments and garner timely feedback
 - Project selection
 - Concept Paper submission
 - Proposal for implementation structure
 - Prior to Compact negotiations

Advance Information for Consultation Participants

Transparency is a core element in Jordan's consultative process; consequently, sharing information with public is essential.

On the other hand, Jordanian population, based on previous experiences, needs more tangible information about the project, than just promoting the idea of another initiative to reduce poverty and increase economic growth.

However, a brief fact sheet about MCC and MCA-Jordan can provide some information for the time being, later through out the process, different tools and channels shall be utilized. Such as; mass media printed and electronic, radio and TV interviews, press releases, and website. Concrete time frame will be developed following media plan finalization.

Press releases are important part of the communication effort; MCA-Jordan in cooperation with the media department within the Prime Ministry will prepare needed press releases related to the unit's activities. One way of doing so, is by asking a member of the media department to attend all activities, prepare a draft document that should be reviewed by the MCA team, having the outreach coordinator as the contact person for this procedure. Depending on the nature of the event, these press releases will be sent to the media on the previous day to the event or the same day. (or some days in advance)

Moreover, it is believed that the creation of a website allows for a centralized forum for both information dissemination and information collection. MCA-Jordan will be able to communicate with, and update, stakeholders in a timely fashion, and stakeholders will be able to provide written input (including comments, ideas, and feedback) which can be compiled and analyzed throughout the Consultative Process. The website will contain information on MCC and MCA, along with contact information for the MCA office and an email address for stakeholders who want more information.

Furthermore, results of consultation events will be documented and shared on the website over time.

As for the time being, a link has been developed and placed on the PM website, to provide the public with essential information about MCC, MCA-Jordan, selection criteria and indicators, compact process, and current status of the program.

Documentation of the Consultation Process

Documentation of the process:

- Workshops reports
- Evaluation forms
- Feedback mechanism (electronic Info-email)
- Website , online publishing of relevant documents and reports
- Media , press releases, media archiving (electronic and hard copy)



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