

CONCEPT NOTE

“MINARET Access to Finance Intervention in Municipalities”

Tuesday 28 January 2020, 10:00 - 14:00
The St. Regis Amman Hotel, Amman, Jordan

Co-organizer: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) - Beirut, Lebanon.

Background:

MINARET is expected to result in a new and transformative agenda for municipalities. The implementation of Access to Finance at municipal level will require innovative, multi-sectoral and multidimensional approaches. The project represents a roadmap for municipalities and investors explaining legal, financial, and administrative requirements for establishing public private partnerships at the regional and national level.

Underpinning the Access to Finance intervention, MINARET supports local governance at the municipal level in areas of improved service delivery, organizational management, public engagement, community cohesion, and decentralization preparation. Since municipalities face difficulties in financing capital assets and covering deficit due to high operating expenses, including salaries and wages, this prevents local governments from providing or expanding public services, pursuant to their mandate in the municipalities' law. In addition, there are issues related to limited financial resources facing these municipalities. MINARET plans to improve the business environment at the local level to attract investors and developers. This shall be accomplished by empowering municipal councils and improving local leadership, planning, and accountability to enhance governance, increase participatory planning (by putting citizens at the heart of the planning and development process), and support partnerships between the public and private sector to increase training and employment. A decentralized approach will leverage local resources and key interventions to reduce bureaucratic obstacles and increase competitiveness.

With that being said, municipalities should be equipped to properly take on new responsibilities and leading roles in implementing decentralized tasks at the local level under the local rules, regulations and constitutions. This means that the municipal administrations shall plan and manage along sectoral lines in a coordinated and integrative manner, to become able to fully maximize the synergies between water, energy, food or land and the potential co-benefits arising from integrated resource management. Consequently, the nexus approach intends to integrate planning and management processes of the key sectors of energy, water and food/land considering the resources and contributing to the long-term sustainable development of the rapidly growing municipalities in MENA regions.

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Expected Outcomes:

1. Improve the understanding of current municipal capacities and effectiveness to deliver key services.
2. Provide insight on community perceptions of municipal effectiveness and responsiveness, as well as mechanisms through which municipalities communicate with investors and seek trust.
3. Provide a comprehensive understanding of the position of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion within the community with regards to their engagement with the municipality, barriers faced in such engagement, and their level of participation in planning and decision-making processes for municipal service delivery.
4. Improve regional and national coordination and service delivery.

Modality of event:

The event will be organized in the form of a theater shape consisting of high-level representatives from local municipalities (mayors), national governments, international organizations and bilateral donors, and a linear table of panelists that includes speakers specialized in the area of Access to Finance within NEXUS Approach at the municipal level. Each side will share knowledge and experience in decentralization and how such an approach can be responsive to both the SDGs and the municipalities' mandate.

Time and Place:

Date : 28 January 2020

Time : 10:00 – 14:00

Venue: The St. Regis Amman Hotel, Amman, Jordan.

Participation:

The event is open to all stakeholders relevant to financing the local implementation of MINARET/Access to Finance Agenda. Participants to the event will include representatives from regional, national and local governments, the private sector, international organizations and donors, representatives of non-governmental and community-based organizations. The event will maintain gender parity in terms of women and youth participation as well as marginalized groups and people with special needs.

Audience

OPERATIONAL	<i>MINARET PROJECT TEAM, IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS (INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS)</i>
PROGRAMMATIC	<i>MINARET Project Team, Implementing Partners</i>
STRATEGIC	<i>Donor Agency [SIDA], Co-organizer[ESCWA], Decentralization and Financing Experts</i>

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Sessions

The meeting will offer a set of activities allowing open dialogue, constructive critique and self-reflection.

It will include the following key elements:

Welcome Remarks

Plenary Sessions

‘Summing up’ Sessions

Key Lessons and Way Forward

Contacts:

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Agenda

Welcome and introduction

10:00 - 10:10

Message from Ms. Rula Al-Shaweesh

MINARET Project Manager, Royal Scientific Society/ National Energy Research Center

10:10 - 10:25

Message from HE Erik Ullenhag

Sweden's Ambassador to Jordan

10:25 - 10:35

Message from HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan

President of Royal Scientific Society

10:35 - 10:40

MINARET in a Nutshell: All about aims / achievements

Visual Presentation - Ms. Rula Al-Shaweesh, MINARET Project Manager, Royal Scientific Society/National Energy Research Center

10:40 - 11:30

Panel discussion: Setting the context for the nexus approach in the MENA region

Moderator: Dr. Hammou Laamrani, Senior Expert Water, Energy, Food Security and Climate Change Nexus Economic Sector, League of Arab States

Panelists:

- Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD), ESCWA
- Mr. Oussama Kaassamani, Key Expert - Local Sustainable Development Specialist, EU-funded Clima-Med Acting for Climate in South Mediterranean Project
- Dr. Nisreen Lahham, Advisor, GIZ/Nexus Dialogue Programme - Coordinator of MENA
- Dr. Najib Saab, Secretary General, Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED)

11:30 - 11:40

Commemorative Session - Distribution of commemorative plaques

11:40 - 12:00

Coffee break

12:00 - 12:15

REGEND Project: Integrated and multi-stakeholder Approach for rural and economic development

Ms. Radia Sedaoui, Chief of the Energy Section (ES), SDPD, ESCWA

12:15 - 13:15

Panel discussion: Access to Finance: Challenges and opportunities from a nexus approach

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Moderator: Mr. Jil Amine, Sustainable Development Officer, ES, SDPD, ESCWA

Panelists:

- Dr. Rafik Missaoui, Sustainable Energy Expert, ALCOR
- Ms. Ilda Nahas, Executive Director, Lebanese Microfinance Association (LMFA), Beirut, Lebanon
- Mr. Mr. Zeyad Alsaada, Director of Rural Electrification Department, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR)
- Dr. Syham Bentouati, Managing Director, NAFAS International LLC, Muscat, Oman
- Dr. Mohamad Daher, Vice Mayor, Akkar Al Atika Municipality, Lebanon

13:15 - 13:30 **Open dialogue - questions and answers**

13:30 **Closing**

Lunch

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