

Sector Transformation Case Study

The Jordan Centers of Excellence Program

Client

USAID/Jordan

Project Name

Centers of Excellence (COE)

(Subcomponent of the Chemonics International Achievement of Market Friendly Initiatives and Results (AMIR) Program)

COE Cost

\$1,500,000

COE Duration

August 2002 – September 2004

COE Partner-Beneficiaries

- Ministry of Industry and Trade
- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Information and Communications Technology
- Institute of Standards
- Investment Board
- Export Development and Commercial Centers Corporation
- Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
- Customs Department

Relationship and Background

The Kaizen Company's Sector Transformation Program (STP) evolved from the highly successful Jordan Centers of Excellence (COE) Program.¹ From 2002 to 2004, the USAID funded COE Program played a fundamental role in strengthening Jordanian government and quasi-government institutions and in increasing Jordan's competitiveness. During its two years of operation, diverse ministries, line agencies, and quasi-governmental agencies worked with the COE Program, actively implementing the COE methodology.

Program Findings

Through the COE Program, Jordan's government began transforming itself into a powerful facilitator of private-sector led economic growth and development. Civil servants eagerly embraced COE as it enabled them to better understand government best-practices and to address long-standing institutional shortcomings. Government leaders responded by providing these managers with a top-level mandate for reforms. COE Partners received numerous accolades at the King Abdullah Awards for Government Performance, testifying to the success of the COE Program.

Accolades

- ❖ A COE partner institution won the King Abdullah Award. Another placed third.
- ❖ A civil servant leading COE efforts was recognized as Jordan's top civil servant.
- ❖ The Director of a COE 'star' agency was promoted to Minister.
- ❖ A COE Manager was asked to create Jordan's macro-level reform strategy
- ❖ A COE Manager received a certificate of gratitude from the Finance Minister.

Conclusions

COE heightened both understanding and awareness of government best practices in Jordan. It inspired civil servants in numerous government agencies to develop and implement wide-ranging institutional reforms. Perhaps most importantly, COE expanded government demand for high-quality government reform services. The Jordanian private sector is actively meeting this demand.

COE Market Survey

A survey of COE-partners demonstrated market demand for COE services:

- 90%** felt the benefit greater than or equal to the cost of participation in the COE program.
- 96%** expressed interest in receiving additional institutional transformation assistance.
- 76%** expressed willingness to pay for external assistance with their own funds.

The following page provides an illustrative list of internally-driven reforms inspired by the COE Program at participating Jordanian government institutions.

¹ COE was managed by KC's Managing Director while employed by Chemonics International. STP contains innovations that heighten overall development outcomes. It has an increased focus on creating and/or improving the market for institutional transformation services, and in ensuring that qualified local private sector entities service this market.

COE Inspired Reforms at Jordanian Government Organizations¹

COE at JIS

Through participation in the COE Program, the Jordan Institute for Standards (JIS) launched numerous independent reforms. Reforms transformed JIS operations and greatly improved the support it provided to the private sector. In a manner befitting international best practices but as yet unseen in Jordan, JIS began an ongoing dialogue with relevant institutions on how to better collaborate in achieving national goals. All JIS staff took part in internally developed knowledge management training sessions and began regularly discussing opportunities for better knowledge utilization amongst themselves. JIS institutionalized creative programs to motivate employees, identify potential leaders, and to retain high-achieving staff. JIS contracted a private firm to further e-government initiatives and to assist with electronic documentation. JIS is lending support to other government organizations. At the request of the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC), JIS presented its experiences to assist TRC with its reform efforts.

COE and Customs

The Jordanian Customs Department leveraged COE assistance to create more private sector friendly operations. A charter member of the Jordanian border management task force, Customs is working with relevant government agencies to create an integrated approach to border management and to champion business-friendly borders. An internal brochure, distributed monthly, seeks to inform, involve, and educate all customs staff on various issues including procedures, values, and ongoing reform efforts. The Customs personnel department prepared results-based position descriptions for all staff and integrated them into a comprehensive performance management and evaluation system. For a period of time, a minimum of 60 employees were being brought to Amman and trained internally on the fundamentals of knowledge management. Excepting the task force, these reforms were all designed and driven from within Customs, which also institutionalized a rotating change management team and made participation on this team an important customs-career stepping stone.

Customs Department

- Developed an internal newsletter to proliferate reform initiatives and training opportunities among staff at all branches of the organization.
- Created performance-based position descriptions and had reviews for all staff.
- Underwent comprehensive strategic planning sessions.
- Developed internal transformation team to implement ongoing improvement, established participation on the team as a valued internal career-advancement step.

Jordan Institute for Standards

- Began a structured dialogue with numerous institutional partners to define overlapping objectives and to discuss institutional roles and opportunities for greater collaboration.
- Developed and carried out knowledge management training for all staff.
- Hired a local private firm to support electronic documentation of files to reduce paperwork and take steps towards becoming a paperless organization.
- Contracted a private sector firm to support e-government efforts and a more customer-centered on-line presence.

Jordan Investment Board

- Held a series of presentations and workshops to raise awareness of effective knowledge management and encourage knowledge sharing among staff.
- Developed and implemented a performance-based budgeting program.

Ministry of Planning

- Dedicated one million U.S. dollars to fund COE initiatives.
- A COE staff member was promoted to senior manager, and, at 60, began university studies in human resources management.

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

- Drafted and implemented internal ground rules and procedures to ensure the ongoing identification of organizational improvement objectives and improvement actions.
- Developed a strategic plan with comprehensive qualitative and quantitative goals.
- Linked financial and operational plans to ensure alignment of resources and priorities.

¹ Reforms and successes listed are illustrative. All were designed and driven by the institutions themselves.