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INTRODUCTION

The Standards Alliance is a public-private partnership between the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and USAID designed to assist developing countries in effectively implementing their commitments under the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreement.

The main objectives of the overall Standards Alliance program includes increased understanding of WTO TBT principles, encourage transparency in the development and alteration of technical regulations, and improve implementation of the TBT Agreement's Code of Good Practice for the preparation, adoption and application of standards, with the larger goal of promoting trade and economic development.

Morocco's Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO) have submitted proposals for engagement under the Standards Alliance, and a joint assessment was conducted with JSMO in Amman, Jordan and with MCINET and other stakeholders in Rabat and Casablanca, Morocco in January 2014. To the extent possible, Standards Alliance activities in Jordan and/or Morocco will address regional priorities and will be open to participation by other MENA countries. The results of those meetings, as well as consultations with stakeholders in both countries have informed this work plan.

The Standards Alliance project for MENA has the following objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of WTO TBT Enquiry Points, including notification to the WTO Secretariat of technical regulations and regional networking to reinforce best practices.
- Raise awareness of WTO TBT principles within the private sector and encourage engagement and involvement in the notification and comment process.
- Improve collaboration and cooperation between industry in priority sectors, leading to reduced duplication or conflict in standards and regulatory requirements.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and regional government institutions, to support programs and projects related to standardization, certification and accreditation.

The specific program tasks under the MENA Standards Alliance Project in the first year (described in more detail in the next section) include:

- Seminars to raise awareness among Jordanian and Moroccan industry of TBT principles (how to monitor and respond to notifications), participation in standardization at the national and international level.

- Engagement with the enquiry points of Jordan and Morocco to establish interagency committees and develop staff guidelines for effective enquiry point operation, including advice on a database for enquiries to be used as a knowledge base.
- Training/information exchange on standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment for the electrical and electronic sectors focusing on energy efficiency.

Following completion of the year one activities, expected outcomes of the initiative include:

- Increased response rate on TBT notifications by Jordanian and Moroccan stakeholders.
- Improved quality of answers on inquiries and response time.
- Increased participation in national technical committees of JSMO and in technical committees of international standardization organizations by relevant stakeholders.
- Establishment of a TBT interagency committee in Morocco and Jordan.
- Strengthened connections between Moroccan and Jordanian electrical and electronics industry and U.S.-based SDO's of interest.
- Better understanding of safety and energy efficiency requirements of electrical and electronic appliances by inspectors, traders and industrialists.

ACTIVITIES

In support of the overall project objectives listed above, this section outlines the activities that have already been identified to be carried out in the first year (2014-2015). To the extent possible, the activities listed include the full scope of work. Some activities may require further discussion between counterparts in Jordan, Morocco and the U.S., and other activities may be added to the work plan upon mutual agreement by ANSI and JSMO or ANSI and MCINET, and pending availability of resources. Where possible, the activities described will address regional priorities and will be open to participation from other MENA countries.

1. Awareness building seminars for stakeholders

In order to raise awareness among government agencies and private sector stakeholders, ANSI will work with JSMO in Jordan and with MCINET and IMANOR in Morocco to organize 2-3 seminars covering topics such as:

- WTO TBT principles
- Benefits of commenting on TBT notifications, both domestic and foreign
- How to prepare an effective comment
- Benefit to industry of participation in standardization activities at the national and international levels
- Roles and responsibilities of national and international technical committee members

The seminars may be conducted in conjunction with similar regional activities in the MENA region, and will include participation from U.S. experts in government and private sector. The activities focused on TBT principles will serve as a follow-up to the successful "Conference on Good Regulatory Practice" held in May 2013 in Morocco and attended by 22 Arab countries. For the seminars on participation in

standardization, experts and case studies will be used that reflect standardization sectors of priority for Jordan and/or Morocco.

2. Enquiry point capacity building

The Moroccan enquiry point at IMANOR has expressed an interest in increasing its connections throughout Moroccan government. Engagement with the enquiry point and the establishment of an interagency TBT Committee will help strengthen the capacity of IMANOR to fulfill the responsibility of an enquiry point and raise awareness among regulators.

The Jordanian enquiry point at JSMO has expressed a need for institutionalized knowledge of the responsibilities and guidelines for effective enquiry point operation. The development of a manual or guidebook and advice on a database to keep records of all answered enquiries will help facilitate a consistent approach in Jordan and reduce the staff time required to train new employees on TBT commitments. ANSI will work with experts in the U.S. to assist JSMO with the development of such a guide.

3. Training/information exchange on standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment for the electrical and electronic sectors

In Jordan, ANSI and U.S. industry will work with JSMO to facilitate experts’ exchange on standardization in the electrical/electronic sectors, and to develop information for industry on energy efficiency requirements specifically, and will provide training on safety and energy efficiency requirements for inspectors, traders and industrialists to facilitate trade. In Morocco and Jordan, ANSI will facilitate an exchange between U.S.-based SDO’s and certification bodies, and the National Federation of Electricity and Electronics (FENELEC), with the goal of increasing direct linkages between Moroccan and Jordanian suppliers and U.S. manufacturers.

SCHEDULE

The schedule envisioned for the implementation of the activities described above is shown below.

	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sept-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15
Awareness building seminars												
Set date/location for seminar												
Agree on draft agenda												
Hold seminars												
Enquiry point capacity building												
Agree on content and model for JSMO guide and database												
Prepare draft guide and system analysis for database												
Review/finalize guide												

Develop, test and launch database Establish roadmap for TBT committee Hold first meeting												
Training on standards/CA for electrical/electronic sectors												
Set date/location for exchanges in Jordan and Morocco and for training sessions Agree on draft agendas Hold exchanges and training sessions												