

Empowering Social Accountability on National Level – ESAN

Project Narrative

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1 General objective

ESAN's overall objective is to improve the capacities of citizens by providing learning and networking opportunities on Social Accountability (SA) to 75 selected throughout the country (Southern, Middle and Northern region).

1.2 Specific objective

ESAN's specific goal is to encourage citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes at local levels by providing them with the required suitable Social Accountability (SA) tools and strategies — a special emphasis being placed on participatory, accessible and clear processes, with a focus on local, open budgets.

Strengthening civil society organization, and building a constructive dialogue between government and civil society should ultimately be the launching pad for a sound and sustainable model of cooperation — whereby citizens and CBOs/CSOs are empowered to engage in decision-making and planning processes at local level, while local authorities are able to tailor local development and broader socio-economic initiatives to better serve the needs and priorities of constituents.

2. EXPECTED RESULTS

ESAN's expected results can be fully appreciated by looking at it within the broader context of the Arab Spring's aftermath, characterized by a widespread resolute demand for greater openness for information, involvement in decision-making, and accountability of public officers and employees to the people. With this view, and in line with PJ's longstanding successful experience within this arena, the project is tailored to guarantee realistic and achievable results, namely:

Result (1): increased capacities of 75 CSOs, CBOs, and activists from 6 selected municipalities on SA

Result (2): activation of the networking among CSOs, CBOs and activists who work on SA (also through the presence of media);

Result (3): bridges built between local governments and CSOs/CBOs/activists - to foster active SA - through meetings and seminars;

Result (4): selection of 4 SA initiatives elaborated by CSOs/CBOs/activists, with a focus on local services provided to citizens;

Result (5): promotion of the importance of SA, encouraging and enabling citizens to provide a solid feedback on the services provided and, later on, monitor the progress.

3. EXPECTED IMPACT

The idea of change promoted through the project traces PJ's implicit *theory of change*: increasing individual knowledge and skills, building relationships between civil society and government, and setting up participatory, cooperative processes whereby people can use their skills and maintain their relationships, paves the way for the empowerment of citizen, and for more accountability on the part of governments towards to its citizens — all of which would ultimately facilitate and lead to solutions that meet shared goals. In this sense, the definition of SA “as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability” (World Bank, 2004), to “stimulate demand from citizens and thus put pressure on the state or private sector to meet their obligations to provide quality services” CARE) acquires a concrete meaning and gets closer to “shared leadership”, a pillar of Community Organizing (CO) — as will emerge throughout the trainings. PJ will hire a partner organization, AHSL, as a consultant to specifically

focus on the idea and potential of CO as a way to empower constituency groups be change agents and mobilize communities in active citizenship, building people's leadership and community power.

4. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 1

Project Activities Preparations

A1.1 Signing an agreement between PJ - the Lead applicant, and AHEL - as a consultant: PJ and AHEL are already in contact; however, a meeting between the staff that will be involved will be a must at the beginning of the project to ensure combination of efforts and level of understanding.

A1.2 Desk research: to identify the potential stakeholders to be engaged in the project activities. Participants/trainees will be reached out through other projects PJ will start implementing at the beginning of 2017 (among which the Participatory Budget initiative), and the wide network of contacts PJ maintains with many local CSOs, CBOs and activists — with attention to both those that are part of ANSA (as PJ is) and other activists from the targeted areas.

A1.3 Activities preparation: it includes all logistical steps needed to accomplish the activities, e.g. deciding on suitable trainers, choosing convenient venue, establishment of the criteria to provide opportunity to apply for small grants, etc.

Outputs related to Activity Cluster 1:

A1.1: contract signed between PJ and AHEL - providing training services for activity 2.2

A1.2: desk research conducted: 75 participants will be selected as a total for the six targeted governorates - 25 per Region (South, Center and North of Jordan).

A1.3.1: activities logistical preparations to ensure successful implementation

A1.3.2: criteria for the concession of small grants established

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 2:

National Social Accountability Networking and Capacity Building

A2.1 One-day National Conference to launch the ESAN initiative: the 75 selected participants will be invited to attend a one-day National conference in Amman. The conference will be the first official activity of the project, with an introduction on its basic pillars, contents and mechanisms, on the participants as well as its final goal and relevance with respect to the Jordanian context. Sub-Grants opportunities for the CSOs/CBOs/activists within the targeted areas will also be illustrated.

A2.2.a: Empowering SA Training: the 75 trainees will participate in six, three-day trainings — two trainings in each region, each one gathering 25 participants from the two selected governorates in the targeted area — centered more specifically on Social Accountability concept and practices, with practical emphasis on Budgeting: Open Budgets, Participatory Budgets, Gender Budgets, Child Budgets and Citizen Budgets, in addition to Social Marketing and Policy Papers drafting.

SA will be contextualized within Goal 16 of the 2030 Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), and - drawing upon the toolkit designed by TAP Network (of which PJ represents the contact point in the Arab region). Community Organizing will be the object of a special session.

A2.2.b: Trainees' projects implementation: trainees, who applied for SA initiatives, will apply for sub-grants up to 2,500 €. PJ will select 4 of them (totaling 10.000€), and monitoring with their implementation.

A2.3 One-day National Lessons Learned Conference: following the training sessions, a one-day closing ceremony will be organized in Amman, in order to foster the visibility of the project at the country level, raise awareness on the importance of SA with respect to policies and practices in all spheres of social, political and economic life. The conference will include all involved stakeholders and will be a platform to give the sub-grants to the selected CBOs/CSOs/activists, so that they will be able to implement their project in the aftermath of the initiative's closure. The sub-grantees will be given the floor to speak about their envisaged programme.

After that, an internal feedback will be discussed with the beneficiaries of the projects. Local media (TV and/or radio) will attend as well.

Outputs related to Activity Cluster 2:

A2.1: 1 one-day conference conducted

A2.2.a.1: 6 three-day trainings conducted

- A2.2.a.2:** 75 citizens from the targeted areas receive training on SA tools and methodologies, with reference to Goal 16 and TAP Network
- A2.2.a.3:** a special session on Community Organizing is conducted
- A2.2.b.1:** 4 CSOs, CBOs, activists' initiatives are selected
- A.2.2.B.2: 4 initiatives successfully implemented and monitored
- A2.3.1:** 1 one-day conference conducted
- A2.3.2:** lessons learned will be discussed
- A2.3.3:** 4 CSOs/CBOs/activists' initiatives will be selected and given sub-grants

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 3

Monitoring and Evaluation

A3.1 Ongoing M&E: The Applicant will conduct ongoing M&E to gauge project success and plan future iterations.

Outputs related to Activity Cluster 3:

- A3.1:** Collection of reports and assessments of project successes and failures
- A3.2:** Final evaluation conducted after closure of the project

5. BENEFICIARIES INVOLVED AND METHODOLOGY IDENTIFIED TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT

ESAN will be implemented at the Local Government level, in six municipalities — two per region: **Karak** and **Tafileh**, in the South; **two Eastern Amman areas**, in the Center; **Jerash** and **Ajloun**, in the North.

These areas have been purposely targeted as they make up a combination of large governorates, big cities, and rural areas, thus standing as the most telling example of 'decentralization' — another crucial mechanism fostering SA and contributing to good governance. In addition, all of them - despite an increased awareness about the importance of civic engagement in the decision making processes (especially after 2011), still lack the proficiency in facilitating such practice. Thus, PJ will work with Local Government in the targeted areas through CBOs, CSOs and activists: the project will open the horizon for the stakeholders through different communication channels such as meetings, workshops and seminars, to discuss SA initiatives in their areas.

In line with PJ's longstanding experience in the field, ESAN is built on a methodology relying on **inclusivity** and **interdisciplinarity**, resting on four main SA pillars: citizen-led monitoring of service delivery, access to information, budget transparency and freedom of association, and will work towards achieving its objective by performing three main roles: (a) *Collecting* relevant information, data, and knowledge resources; (b) *Attracting* relevant players and stakeholders locally and nationally; and (c) *Connecting* SA key actors, experts, and practitioners — in line with the Arab Network for Social Accountability (ANSA)'s view and mission. As a member of this network, but also of others such as CIVICUS, Global Partnership for Social Accountability – GPSA, Arab Anti Corruption Network – ACNET, Affinity Group for National Associations – AGNA, and TAP Network, PJ has indeed exposure to the most updated international standards within the SA and good governance field, and will leverage on this synergy to ensure a better and successful execution of the project. In addition to that, the chosen approach is that of **iterative and interactive learning**: training methods emphasize relational activities that engage all participants. Key values and abilities within each training module are communicated primarily through interactive-based activities that promote active learning by doing. Throughout the activities, participants and trainers together will share their observations, successes, and failures, and trainers will monitor and evaluate beneficiaries' learning and adapt training methods according to the needs observed.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

The designed monitoring and evaluation plan is designed in order to meet two goals: to provide ongoing information about project progress towards objectives so that program managers can solve or prevent problems that crop up; and to provide analytical documentation of the programs

effectiveness, successes and failures that will enable internal and external audiences to learn from the program and incorporate these lessons into future work. All project documents will feed into this process, as will the monitoring visits to CSOs/CBOs and activists, and the congerence. PJ will ensure that the evaluation uses gender-sensitive methodologies and techniques. The used M&E approach builds on: (1) *Performance*: Relationship between inputs and outputs and cost efficiency; (2) *Process*: Focus and Style of Participation; (3) *Impact*: Relationship between outputs and outcomes; (4) *Strategy*: Are we doing the right things to achieve our objectives?

Evaluations/monitoring sessions will use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Specific strategies will include:

- **Pre/post-project test:** test to be filled by participants prior and at the end of the training to gain more information about community and stakeholder perceptions toward the planned action, and to collect community-based aspirations. PJ will develop a test (list of multiple choices questions relevant to the training theme) for each training program. Each participant will fill out the same test before and after the training to measure the change in knowledge gained during the training;
- **Roundtable and Focus Group Sessions:** these briefing sessions between trainees and trainers will feed into the evaluation process, and the feedback will be used to inform the training agenda and topics;
- **Training evaluations:** Following each training, both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected, documented and analyzed, written questionnaires, and verbal feedback from participants, trainers, and staff. This includes evaluations of training material filled by participants on the basis of relevance, usefulness, clarity; participants will also be asked about what they learned, how they learned it, what improvements they would make and what additional capacity building they would need;
- **Final evaluation:** it will be internally conducted and will focus on assessing project outcomes and impact.

7. PROJECT WORK PLAN

The duration of the action will be 11 months .														
Activity	Months												Implementing organisation	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
A1.1 Signing an agreement between PJ - the Lead applicant, and AHEL - as a consultant														PJ, AHEL
A1.2 Desk research														PJ
A1.3 Activities preparation														PJ
A2.1 One-day National Conference to launch the ESAN initiative														PJ
A2.2.a: Empowering SA Training														PJ, AHEL
A2.2.b: Trainees' projects implementation														Initiative implementors
A2.3 One-day National Lessons Learned Conference														PJ
A3.1 Ongoing and Final M&E														PJ, External audit, External evaluator

8. ORGANISATION'S CAPACITY AND BACKGROUND

As a local Jordanian not-for-profit organization, Partners-Jordan (PJ) is committed to advance civil society, promote mediation, conflict management and a culture of change, while encouraging citizen participation (with a special attention to marginalized groups — women, youth, and PWDs) in Jordan's social and political development in order to strengthen the ongoing political reform efforts. PJ is also part of several regional and international networks which tackle good governance and participation of citizens — with SA representing a pillar of Partners-Jordan's effort to positively reverse the challenges Jordan faces in its path towards greater democracy. Examples of said networks are: CIVICUS, Global Partnership for Social Accountability — GPSA, Arab Network for Social Accountability — ANSA, Arab Anti Corruption Network — ACNET, Affinity Group for National Associations — AGNA and TAP Network. Through these networks, Partners-Jordan has exposure to the most updated international standards, learning practices, introducing them into the Jordanian scenario.

A member of PartnersGlobal Network, since its establishment in 2006 PJ has indeed conducted several projects mainly focused on building the capacity of different stakeholders - CBOs/CSOs, government and private sectors - to engage in activities committed to instilling good governance and democratic practices, and to encouraging local community members to voice their opinion in decision-making processes. In this sense, ESAN is related to PJ's following projects:

Arab Initiative of an Equitable Budget (April 2008 - May 2010): PJ took part in a regional project funded by the Beyster Institute and MEPI, aimed at raising the awareness of the importance of citizen participation in fiscal budgeting in Jordan, Yemen and Bahrain, and enhancing the civil society and business sector involvement in drafting of the state's General Budget. The project has been conducted by three NGOs representing the three countries, respectively: Partners- Jordan in Jordan, Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) in Yemen, and Bahrain Human Rights Association in Bahrain.

Functional to the final goal, the following activities clusters were carried out: (1) Raise the awareness of civil society and private sector organizations on how the fiscal budget is developed, through conducting awareness workshops in the three countries on cooperative planning, consensus building, advocacy, organizational management and good governance - often with a focus on anti corruption knowledge and practices; (2) Raise awareness about the importance of public participation in fiscal budgeting for local government, municipalities, local councils, relevant government officials and parliament member, through a number of focus groups; (3) Provide more access to information related to budgeting processes through surveys, publications and ongoing website update; (4) Inform citizens on results of Parliament budgeting hearing sessions through a number of press releases.

Participatory Budgeting, People Voice in numbers (November 2012 - February 2014): funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, it aimed to enhance opportunities for public participation in the budgeting process as well as improve public access to timely and accurate information on Municipal budgets and expenditures in six municipalities in Jordan, selected from the South Middle and North regions.

In concrete terms, this implied the following two steps: (1) to raise the awareness of civil society organizations, local community members and municipality staff, on developing participatory municipal budgets and its importance via workshops in the selected municipalities; (2) to assess local community needs and priorities of the six municipalities, in order to build up and develop their budgets accordingly — a highly cooperative process inclusive of all stakeholders, including local community members, municipality executive staff and financial personnel, NGO/CBO. The mission proved to be successful thanks to a wide range of activities, among which the design and development of training material for the awareness workshop; the distribution of brochures to local community and municipality staff on tools and benefits of participatory budgeting; comprehensive reports on budget priorities of local communities in the municipalities; meetings between financial consultants and financial department at the targeted Municipalities; the update of the Website; the organization of a lessons learned conference; and the increase in media awareness of PB as

measured by press coverage through press articles/stories, and the publication of 2 movies about the PB process on YouTube (cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3-RL1dld9Q). Among its standing results: (1) the preparation of 6 participatory budgets; (2) citizens' participation in budgeting reached to 1,973,305 USD.

Encouraging Open Government Policies that Support Economic Growth (September 2013 - August 2015): aimed to increase the participation in the budget cycle, and Publishing the Jordanian Citizen Budget and Mid Year Review - MYR for 2014 and 2015.

Funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative – MEPI in DC, it was implemented in cooperation with Financial Services Volunteers Corps –FSVC, and lead to: (1) the issuance of a Citizen Budget in cooperation with CSOs for the first time; (2) the establishment of the “Jordanian Budget Alliance”; (3) the provision of consultation with the Parliament in reviewing the 2015 Budget Law; (4) the draft of the first MYR.

Integrating Anti Corruption Best Practices on Municipality Level (December 2013 and September 2014): designed to install sustainable legal remedies for at least three corruption practices existing in 3 Jordanian municipalities - Irbid (Nord), Karak (South) and Balqa (Center) by creating or modifying municipal bylaws /regulations in consultation with decision makers and citizens.

Funded by MEPI Tunisia, the project allowed for: (1) the creation of ‘Customizing Jordanian, Arabic Anti –Corruption Local Tool’, inspired by International best practices on combating corruption; (2) the conduction of the first time-ever local self-assessments in the three targeted areas. Additionally, Irbid Municipality reviewed its organizational structure, while Karak Municipality created a guide on employees discipline and transfer, as well as a HR committee.