

United Nations



**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
Buyer-Seller Meeting on Value Chain Development
Qab Elias, Bekaa, Lebanon, 14 July 2021**

INFORMATION NOTE

I. Background

Value chain development encompasses a cumulative set of actions and activities that are necessary to bring a product or service from its inception to its final consumption and disposal after use. These activities include but are not limited to buying seeds and seedlings, agricultural production, manufacturing, marketing, creativity, distribution, and delivery services to final consumers. In the agricultural sector the value chain development of agriculture produce connects farmers on the ground to end-market merchants through two intermediaries: the producers and the traders. These value chains play a major role in empowering small cooperatives to sell their products at a larger scale and a higher market value by facilitating this linkage between small and medium enterprise with traders and markets. Nevertheless, in the Arab Region many challenges associated with these value chains exist, limiting individuals' effective use of the food value chain, most importantly, with a wide gendergaps at the economic and social levels..

To this end, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia is implementing a Development Account project on “Enhancing resilience and sustainability of agriculture in the Arab region” which aims at building national capacities to enhance resilience and sustainability of the agriculture sector in the Arab Region, with a specific focus on three target countries, namely: Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

In Lebanon, challenges related to value chain development range from lack of knowledge and information on sustainable production, marketing strategies and appropriate green technologies to the current financial crisis and restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ESCWA is organizing a four days training workshop on Agriculture Green Technologies that will involve women cooperatives working in the agriculture sector in the Bekaa area. The training will focus mainly on using sun dried products in producing and selling fruits and vegetables locally which will guarantee profitability and sustainability of women cooperative in the area. To further guarantee this sustainability, ESCWA is organizing this buyers-sellers meeting that will gather concerned entities across the food value chain to promote food products and agro-food trade and improve the Food Value Chains in Lebanon.

II. Objectives of the meeting

The buyers-sellers meeting aims at strengthening capacities of local cooperatives working in the agri-food sector in the Bekaa region in Lebanon to improve their production and exploring the possibility of using local produce (peaches, tomatoes, chilies and beans) to produce new food products with good marketing potential, thus contributing to a more sustainable and resilient food value chain.

This meeting will also allow professional authorities, producers, exporters and service providers to exchange experience and best practices with women cooperatives to enhance their learning experience and improve their capacity in a range of areas including, green technologies, marketing, producing good quality food products and receiving fair prices. This discussion will engender a better identification of the actors that make up the value chain, a better understanding of the problems that exist along this chain and how to solve them. Moreover, It will help identify suitable distribution channels and the requirement of local and international markets, as well as expand demand through networking and finally prioritizing solutions and activities that different actors could carry out.

III. Thematic Areas

This meeting will mainly focus on the connection between sellers and buyers and will include discussion with stakeholders from the chamber of commerce, industry and agriculture, research institutes and donors to further develop the value chain of dried products. This session will allow connecting cooperatives with potential buyers and will facilitate their access to the market. In addition, information related to competitors' prices, consumers' preferences (color, size, organoleptic properties), packaging requirements will be also shared to enlighten cooperatives on how to be profitable in the long run. The meeting will be divided into two sessions the first focusing on understanding the market (supply and demand), and the second focusing on potential future collaborations among the different stakeholders to ensure an effective and efficient value chain:

- Session 1: Understanding the market (supply and demand)
 - Identifying components of the food value chain (farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers)
 - Identifying opportunities and challenges for producing dried products mainly Apples, Peaches, Tomatoes, Chilies and Beans
 - Understanding the competition locally and internationally
 - Understanding market and product requirements (size, quantity, price, organoleptic properties)
- Session 2: Discussing potential future collaborations to ensure successful value chains
 - Identifying ways to access local and international markets
 - Identifying means to create/increase demand for the concerned dried products
 - Exploring potential support and funding opportunities for SMEs such as agro-food cooperatives
 - Discussing follow up options and guidance through extension service and incubators/accelerators

IV. Organizational issues

A. Participants

This meeting will gather officials from research institutes, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and technical experts (producers, exporters and service providers) as well as women participants from agricultural cooperatives working in food processing from the West and Central Bekaa areas of Lebanon.

B. Date and venue

The meeting will be held at the municipality of Qab Elias, Bekaa, Lebanon. The duration of the meeting will be for 3 hours on 14 July 2021.

C. Language

The workshop will be conducted in the Arabic language.

D. Correspondence

Correspondence related to the meeting should be directed to the following address:

ESCWA

Dr. Rami Sabella
Economic Affairs Officer
Food and Environment Policies Section
Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster
Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +961 1 978512
Fax: +961 1 981510
Email: rami.sabella@un.org