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# RESTRUCTURING ASEZA'S ONE STOP SHOP

FINAL REPORT  
AQABA COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT II (ACED II) PROGRAM

May 22, 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development.  
It was prepared by AECOM.

# RESTRUCTURING ASEZA'S ONE STOP SHOP

## FINAL REPORT AQABA COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT II (ACED II) PROGRAM

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USAID Jordan

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# ACRONYMS

ACED	Aqaba Community and Economic Development Program
ACED II	Aqaba Community and Economic Development II Program
ASEZ	Aqaba Special Economic Zone
ASEZA	Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
IDD	Institutional Development Directorate
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSS	One Stop Shop
PPP	Public Private Partnership
QSIP	Quality Service Improvement Program
SLA	Service-level Agreement
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with ASEZA’s Strategic Plan, the USAID Aqaba and Community Economic Development II (ACED II) Program supported ASEZA in its continued efforts to improve its One Stop Shop services delivered to investors and local residents. Using the restructuring plan that was approved by ASEZA’s board of commissioners, ACED II assisted ASEZA in: 1) Supporting the OSS restructuring implementation; 2) Delivering customer services skills training; 3) Delivering a call center skills training; 4) Delivering English language training; and 5) Supporting ASEZA’s IDD in revising and updating two parts of ASEZA’s services manual.

Working with the ASEZA institutional development directorate (IDD), the ACED II team planned and implemented a second round of the Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP). The goal of the QSIP II was sustain the process of continued improvement of ASEZA’s service quality and transform local government employees into genuine public servants driven not by rules and regulations, but by a vision and a mission.

ACED II also facilitated the coordination between ASEZA and its service provision partners such as utilities, public security, and civil defense, by establishing a coordination mechanism to satisfy the needs and expectations of ASEZA’s clients.

Finally to ensure that all service procedures are clear to ASEZA’s clients, and in order to enhance transparency in public services provision, ACED II supported ASEZA’s IDD to update the service manuals of the OSS. ACED II supported the update of two directorates’ services manuals. ACED II’s initial target was to update all OSS service manuals. However, due to the fact that ASEZA began a new, internal restructuring initiative in the second quarter of 2014 the restructuring is expected to continue following the end the ACED II, Therefore ACED II supplied a template and training to ASEZA on how to complete the manual once the internal restructuring is complete.



An Aqabite fills out paperwork at the OSS.

# INTRODUCTION

In southern Jordan, the national and local governments have dedicated time and resources into developing and facilitating investment in a region known as the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ). The regional governmental authority, ASEZA, is trying to attract investors by promoting economic liberalization. As one of the many ways ASEZA is implementing this policy, ASEZA established a One Stop Shop (OSS) in Aqaba, Jordan. The OSS aims to reduce barriers to investment, promote transparency, and streamline procedures. The OSS provides a centralized location for new entities wishing to work in Jordan to obtain permits, licenses, and visas.

As a relatively new institution, the OSS suffers from lack of qualified staff and resources to effectively support the growing demand of the region. ASEZA identified these challenges in its 2007-2010 Strategic Plan and coordinated with USAID to receive support under the Aqaba Community and Economic Development (ACED) Program. ACED focused its technical assistance on providing training courses for skills development. However, with the growing institution, ACED's follow-on program, the Aqaba Community and Economic Development II (ACED II) Program, stepped in to provide tailored support for the OSS. In close coordination with ASEZA's Institutional Development Directorate (IDD), ACED II implemented a number of activities to support OSS restructuring, development and implement OSS service-level agreements (SLAs) and/or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with external partners. ACED II also conducted customer service and call center skills trainings, and supported the IDD in revising and updating the services manual.

# SOFT SKILLS BUILDING INITIATIVES

Providing quality service to customers and future investors is critical for the development of the ASEZ. Customer service representatives at the OSS are the first interaction that many foreign and local investors have in Jordan. Accordingly, the role they play is critical to attracting and maintaining these individuals and organizations. In addition to a targeted Quality Service Improvement Program (QSIP), ACED II worked with the IDD to train the OSS staff on a number of soft skills. These soft skill trainings included customer service, English language, and call center skills.

## **BUILDING CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS**

Beginning on August 19, 2013, ACED II organized the first of two three-day workshops to develop customer service skills for the employees who deal directly with clients. The first workshop was conducted during the period 19-21 August 2013. The second workshop was held on September 9-11, 2013.

The course addressed topics including: communication skills, work ethics, how



Call Center Skills Training

to handle tough customers, how to gather feedback and how to improve service. In addition to enhancing their customer service skills, participants also learned about ASEZA's management vision and organizational values in these workshops.

Forty three (43) staff members of the one stop shop attended these workshops, of which 16 were females.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING**

As many of the investors interested in Aqaba do not speak Arabic as their native language, ACED II worked with the IDD to implement two levels of English courses—basic and intermediate. The English language courses trained OSS staff on basic communication skills to respond to questions and on how to provide clear and concise answers. The three English language courses were conducted between December 2 and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Over 40 of the OSS staff attended the courses with 12 of them were females.



OSS English Training

### **CALL CENTER SKILLS TRAINING**

In anticipation of the opening of the call center, ACED II provided call center skills training to ASEZA staff expected to man the call center. The trainings focused on enabling the staff to effectively communicate with all clients and callers inquiring about ASEZA's Services.

ACED II held two call center skills training workshops on March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Each training lasted for three days. Seven participants identified by ASEZA attended the trainings. One of the seven was female.

### **UPDATING ASEZA'S OSS SERVICES MANUALS**

ACED II worked closely with the ASEZA Institutional Development Directorate (IDD) to update the OSS service manuals, to ensure that all services procedures are clear to ASEZA's clients, and to enhance transparency in public services provision.

ACED II met with the Labor, Visas and Residence Directorate and the Architecture and Planning Department who are responsible for service provision through the OSS, and documented the as is procedures for provision of services. Following a thorough review of the service provision methodologies, ACED II made a series of recommendations to enhance and simplify the service provision process. ACED II discussed with the relevant directorates and they approved the new procedures and authorized ACED II to move forward in updating the manuals with these revisions. The new updated OSS service manuals for the Labor, Visas and Residence Directorate, and the Architecture and Planning Department, will be made available to ASEZA's clients through ASEZA's website. They will also be printed in the form of flyers and brochures.

In the second quarter of 2014, ASEZA announced that it would begin undergoing an internal restructuring process within the remaining OSS service provision directorates. With the restructuring, ASEZA anticipated that a number of regulations and processes that control the work of these directorates would change. ASEZA's IDD requested that ACED II stop developing the remaining service manuals for these directorates. ACED II and ASEZA agreed to use the developed manuals as a model for future service

manual updates once the restructuring is complete. At that time, the manual will be revised by the IDD staff in cooperation with the relevant directorates. The IDD expects that it will take at least four months to complete the restructuring process, at which time ACED II will have already closed.

Following the completion of the restructuring process, the developed service manuals and other manuals for directorates including the Tax and Revenue Directorate, which will be developed after the completion of the restructuring, will be distributed to the call center representatives. This will enable the call center staff to become aware of the required procedures for each service when answering clients and callers inquiring about ASEZA's Services.

Finally, the service manuals will help ASEZA in identifying its partners (e.g. other public institutions), beneficiaries and the roles they play. This identification is very important to improve and simplify ASEZA's service provision, and to start the integration of currently implemented information systems. This will eventually build its own Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

# CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The OSS restructuring activities were interrelated and provided interactive opportunities for employees at ASEZA' OSS to enhance their ability to provide high-quality services. During this pioneering process, the following have been noted:

1. Variation in the level of performance and commitment among members of the OSS team. This is attributed to the absence of motivation. Accordingly, we recommend having financial or non-financial incentives to increase participation and commitment levels for the OSS team including the potential call center representatives.
2. Improvement is a continuous process, and ASEZA's management should work in the future to identify further opportunities for improvement to its services, taking into consideration the expectations of the beneficiaries of ASEZA's services.
3. This pioneering process at ASEZA has successfully achieved its goals of improving the quality of services provided through the OSS. The program also helped foster a new culture of excellence in service. In summation, the OSS team executed this program in a manner that exceeded expectations.
4. Gender Participation: A significant number of women participated in the OSS capacity building activities. Female employees constituted 33 percent of the total number of participants in the training exercises (29 out of 89), despite the fact that only 21 percent of the total ASEZA employees are women.

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Amman, Jordan

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