

## **Report PHASE 2- Shiraka Entrepreneurship Eco System Development project**

### **Phases and timeline of the programme**

- Phase 1: Recruitment and selection, kick-off meeting in target countries – October 2019
- **Phase 2: Benchmarking Study Visit and action planning – 20 to 24 January 2020**
- Phase 3: Action plan development
- Phase 4: Training in target countries
  - ✓ Jordan: 30 March – 3 April 2020
  - ✓ Morocco: 12 April – 17 April 2020
  - ✓ Tunisia: 20 – 24 April 2020
- Phase 5: Implementation of the action plans
- Phase 6: Presenting results in target countries – September 2020

### **Benchmarking Study Visit (phase 2) 20 – 24 January 2020**

#### Participants

The trainers welcomed 23 participants (7 Jordanian, 8 Moroccan and 8 Tunisian participants) to the Benchmarking Study Visit. We did not manage to reach the full number of participants per country because unfortunately 1 Moroccan participant cancelled his participation last-minute because the internal approval of his organization Maroc PME could not be issued (despite an earlier signed and stamped employer statement). 1 Jordanian participant had to withdraw, the suggested replacement unfortunately never responded to our emails in November and December to get in touch with each other. 1 Jordanian participant had to unfortunately cancel in early January because of health-related circumstances. For Tunisia, no replacement for the ecosystem expert could be nominated by the Embassy, despite extensive efforts.

#### Content Benchmarking Study Visit

The programme was based on the results of the kick-off meeting in the respective countries and a Training Needs Analysis based on the preparatory assignment we asked the participants to submit beforehand. The programme during the Benchmarking Study Visit offered a variety of sessions by experts, as well as a Study Visit to Delft (Yes!Delft) and Amsterdam (Amsterdam Economic Board, Metropole Regio Amsterdam, Smart Cities Amsterdam and Impact Hub Amsterdam). Time was also reserved in the programme to start with the action planning for the respective countries. The diversity in professional backgrounds and nationalities of the participants created a positive atmosphere with an eagerness to learn from examples in the Netherlands and each other. Fruitful and engaged discussions were visible throughout the week, as well as pro-active networking with experts and fellow participants.

#### Action planning

During the first day of the Benchmarking Study Visit, the country groups were re-introduced to the idea of developing an action plan. On Friday afternoon they received time to really work on the action planning. This initial brainstorm resulted in the plans discussed below, which will be further developed in Phase 3 with the coaching of the trainers. The action plans are mainly directed towards achievable results (quick wins), while taking in mind the seven elements and stakeholders of the Ecosystem Model as presented during the training.

### *Morocco*

The idea is to set up a Living lab in Casablanca at the University. The following stakeholders are involved: government and administration, the market (enterprises), the university and the users. The users are territorial collectives & municipalities. Users are also entrepreneurs who are getting benefit of the living lab.

### *Jordan*

80 incubators have been established in Jordan all across the country. The action plan is focused on how to make these incubators sustainable and self-sufficient. The goal is to strengthen the current ones by embedding the incubators well in the Jordanian ecosystem.

### *Tunisia*

The Tunisian group has come up with 2 action plans.

- The first proposes to make a change in the procurement system, and apply the same opportunities for start-ups to get more access to public contracts. Ultimately, the goal is that those applicants with the best business plans will get access to public market. This involves lobbying from the private sector and raising the awareness of the decision makers at the government level.
- The other plan is to develop a platform for investors, which is related to funding, procurement, etc. This platform will be a place to link all actors of the ecosystem. If an entrepreneur is looking for funding, information or technical assistance, incubation, etc. then the platform is the hub to receive all the necessary information. This plan responds to the current lack of information among the actors of the ecosystem and the information which is scattered.

### Evaluation phase 2

The evaluation of the Benchmarking Study Visit is based on participants feedback to the online evaluation, oral feedback of participants during the program and feedback from the trainers and experts. Overall the Bench marking study visit was highly appreciated by the participants. They received a lot of valuable insights from the different experts, study visits and from the exchange among each other. Some positive points to be highlighted in particular

- interesting topics, speakers and study visits (e.g. Orange Corners and study visit to Yes Delft)
- network reception (including presence of RVO and the embassy staff)
- the fact that most elements of the Eco system model were covered in the different sessions
- interesting exchanges because of the presence of civil servants and entrepreneurs
- the presence of the trainers during the whole 5 days
- the group consists of some well-motivated and knowledgeable participants
- logistical support (e.g. visa, hotel etc) was very much appreciated, also thanks to the support of the embassies

In addition to the positive feedback, there also some points for improvement to share, namely

- need for more time for action planning and start at an earlier moment during the week. This would allow the group for more time to discuss the issue they want to address and create an in-depth context analysis before starting the actual planning. The consequence would be to have less sessions for experts, and more time to work on Action Plans

- be more involved in the recruitment of participants (e.g. motivation, position in the ministry etc.). Need for more clear guidelines. Make sure that participants are involved in the entrepreneurship ecosystem and that all the elements of the ecosystems are covered. It would be an added value if they already have some kind of knowledge on entrepreneurship
- need to start the study visit with more background of the whole Shiraka project (e.g. by RVO giving more information on why this program was developed and room for questions on the first day)

### **Looking ahead: Phase 3 and 4**

In phase 3, the respective country groups will continue with the action planning, stakeholder mapping and development of their plans more in detail. They will be coached along the way by the trainers. The local partners are also available to facilitate in this process. The final action plans will be agreed upon in April, as the action plans will be reviewed during the training and implementation programme in Phase 4. Participants are in touch with the experts to hand in a draft of the Action Plan before the training in Phase 4.

During the 5 day training and implementation program, stakeholders will be visited to test the proposed actions in various compositions of participants. The final day all participants will assemble to see what they have learned, and to make adjustments to the plan based on the feedback of the stakeholder. Advisory Board Members will also be requested to share their feedback during the program.

### **General points of feedback on the project**

Several concerns have been raised by the participants during the training, which we would like to share here:

- the timeframe of the implementation of the action plan is very short. Ramadan this year is from 23 April to 23 May 2020, this is followed by a long summer holiday in which not much activities are implemented.
- participants find it challenging to work on the Ecosystem model as a whole. They do not know how to do this without having special funding, time available or having support from their hierarchy.
- the need for accountability. Who is the driver behind the action planning? Not all participants have a same level of motivation. One reason is their diverse backgrounds and lack of “entrepreneurial mindset” among some participants.
- generally development programmes focus on one area of entrepreneurship eg, MSMEs, Academic institutions, Business service providers, etc. Developing a whole ecosystem is dependent upon the development of *interdependencies* between actors/feeders. This is a large task for participants of the programme who are in full-time employment.
- working with three nationalities and managing/implementing the project in four languages (Dutch, English, French & Arabic) poses both logistical and cognitive challenges.