United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UN-ESCWA

Workshop on Knowledge Sharing and Networking in the ESCWA Region
Beirut, 17 to 19 December 2008

Project on Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities

Preliminary Information Note

1.   Background

The United Nations Development Account project entitled "Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities" is being implemented by the Regional Commissions over a period of 36 months which started in mid-2006. The main objective of this pilot project is to empower disadvantaged communities by transforming selected ICT access points/telecentres into networked knowledge hubs. This objective will be reached by providing, developing, organizing, sharing and disseminating knowledge pertinent to targeted communities in key areas of sustainable development such as employment, education, gender and health.

Project activities that has already taken place include: (a) Review and assessment of ICT access points; (b) Development of a detailed implementation plan; (c) Selection of ICT access points and planning project activities; (d) Preparation of regional and global strategies on the transformation and networking process; and (e) Preliminary design for the creation and implementation of a knowledge network portal.

The next planned activity, subject of this information note, is a training workshop targeting the key staff of telecentres selected as the main candidates for the pilot phase of the transformation and networking process.

2.   Objective

The main objective of the workshop is to familiarize the key staff of selected centres with the process of transforming telecentres into networked knowledge hubs. Pertinent training sessions will hone in the skills of trainees and will prepare them to better manage the transformation and networking process and to maximize the chances of success of the project.

3.   Topics

The workshop will include presentations, panel discussions and hands-on training sessions. It will cover the following topics:

- The ESCWA regional strategy for networked knowledge hubs;
- The global strategy and how it links with the ESCWA regional strategy;
- A plan of action for the implementation of the regional strategy;
- Tools and mechanisms for the transformation of telecentres into networked knowledge hubs;
- Public relations and marketing;
- Creation, maintenance and administration of Websites and electronic discussion forums;
- Knowledge management concepts including data collection, mining, creation and dissemination;
- The project's knowledge network portal.

4.   Expected outcome

The main outcome of the training workshop will be the development of a plan of action to implement the strategy developed by ESCWA's regional knowledge manager. The plan will highlight activities that will lead to the gradual transformation of telecentres into networked knowledge hubs.

Other outcomes include the improvement of the participants' management and marketing skills and the development of their knowledge management capabilities. After the workshop, participants will be able to populate pages of the newly-developed knowledge portal which are relevant to their telecentres and to maintain electronic discussion forums which would be of interest to their users.

5.   Participants

The workshop will be attended by key staff of selected ICT access points which have been identified as potential partners in the review and assessment report carried out by ESCWA in an earlier phase of the project.

6.   Venue and Dates

The three-day workshop will take place between 17 and 19 December 2008 at the UN House, Riad el-Solh Square, Beirut Lebanon.

7.   Language

The main working language of the workshop will be Arabic. English may be used as a second working language, specifically during technical computer related training sessions. Participants are expected to understand both languages as there will be no simultaneous translation.

8.   Additional Information

The Web page **http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=925E** provides the latest information on the meeting. Enquiries and requests for additional information should be addressed to:

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