



Project on the uptake and use of **ISO 26000** on **Social Responsibility** within the **MENA region**



Case Study

Country: Egypt

Organization: Cairo Chamber of Commerce



The MENA ISO 26000 project (1/2)

- **Donor agency:** Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- **Implementation period:** 2011 - 2014
- **Beneficiary Countries:** Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria* and Tunisia

* Syria was suspended from the ISO membership in July 2013 and has not benefited from the project thereafter.



The MENA ISO 26000 project (2/2)

Project Goal: To contribute to achieving sustainable development through effective integration of social responsibility principles and practices (ISO 26000) in the MENA region, using the national standards body (NSB) as the central pivot

Project Purpose: To build capacity in the MENA region through the creation of pool of national expertise supporting selected pilot organizations to implement social responsibility principles and practices (ISO 26000).

Output 1.1: National human and institutional capacity built on ISO 26000 and its application in the pilot countries within the MENA region

Output 1.2: Improved national awareness on social responsibility among the MENA region

Output 1.3: Technical support provided to selected pilot organizations operating in the MENA region to facilitate their application of ISO 26000

Output 1.4: Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on SR within the MENA region operational

Output 1.5: Regional exchange mechanism on Social Responsibility set-up



The MENA ISO 26000 project – Achieved Results in Egypt (1/3)

▪ At project output level

<i>Output 1.1: National human and institutional capacity built on ISO 26000 and its application in the pilot country</i>	<i>Output 1.2: Improved national awareness on social responsibility among the MENA region</i>	<i>Output 1.3: Technical support provided to selected pilot organizations operating in the MENA region to facilitate their application of ISO 26000</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 trained national project experts• 1261 staff trained in pilot organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 national awareness-raising events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 participating pilot organizations• 13 POs delivered all deliverables• 100 training events by NEs for POs



The MENA ISO 26000 project – Achieved Results in Egypt (1/3)

▪ At project purpose level

<i>Number of POs completing key project deliverables – as assessed by IEs</i>	<i>Number of good case studies prepared by POs – as assessed by PO</i>	<i>Performance of national project experts – as assessed by IE</i>
<p>Measured results: 13 pilot organizations completed the deliverables.</p> <p>General feedback: Two pilot organizations were still in the process of finalizing their long-term strategies at the end of 2014. The general quality of the deliverables was good from the beginning of the project and throughout.</p>	<p>Measured results: As agreed, Egypt submitted three case studies.</p> <p>General feedback: The three selected pilot organizations from Egypt delivered good quality case studies according to the agreed template. The case studies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUEED (large NGO for women and children) illustrating top management commitment and continual improvement • Cairo Chamber of Commerce, illustrating sphere of influence and fair operating practices • Domina Coral Bay Hotel (tourism) illustrating resource management and sphere of influence <p>All of these organizations now have some information on their external website regarding their work on ISO 26000 and sustainable development.</p>	<p>Measured results: Thirteen out of fourteen participated actively and with some further mentoring they are able to offer training and advice to future organizations.</p> <p>General feedback: The project experts need to stay up-to-date with standards and tools, as well as current sustainability affairs, relevant to the application of ISO 26000. There are many examples in Egypt of project experts taking voluntary initiatives to promote ISO 26000 and the project also outside the project.</p>



The MENA ISO 26000 project – Achieved Results in Egypt (1/3)

▪ At project goal level

<i>Level of integration of SR in pilot organizations – as assessed by POs</i>	<i>Quality of advice provided by national project expert – as assessed by PO</i>	<i>Overall rating of project effectiveness – as assessed by PO, NE and NSB</i>	<i>Uptake of SR in country – as assessed by NE and NSB</i>
<p>General feedback: Almost all pilot organizations in Egypt indicate that the project has helped them move their performance towards a more proactive approach. A few pilot organizations indicated that they have stayed at the same level of performance in some parameters, for example governance and decision making, external networking, sphere of influence. This is understandable as these changes require more time than was available through the project. One pilot organization indicated having moved from proactive approach towards SR due diligence and gap analysis of social responsibility issues to reactive approach. This is understandable as there were internal challenges within the organization.</p>	<p>General feedback: All but one of the national project experts were recommended by the pilot organizations to other organizations looking for advice on ISO 26000. The quality of the advice provided by the project experts improved over the project period.</p>	<p>General feedback: In general the project is seen by POs, NEs and the NSB as having had a significant positive impact, especially in the areas of executives' and practitioner's understanding of social responsibility, and changed approach to managing social responsibility. Areas that were seen as having medium positive impact include improved understanding throughout the whole organization (including the NSB) and the sphere of influence, as well as changes to the core strategy.</p>	<p>General feedback: Uptake of ISO 26000 improved as a result of the project based on perceived stakeholder interest. There are several examples of organizations promoting similar standards and tools related to social responsibility that have much better understood and contextualized ISO 26000 in their offers. 30 % of the project experts strongly (60 % and the NSB partially) agree that project has improved the understanding of social responsibility and ISO 26000 outside the project. Levels of national sales of the standard ISO 26000 before and after the project are unknown.</p>



The MENA ISO 26000 project – Intergating SR throughout organaization

Figure 4 from ISO 26000:2010 illustrates what is expected from an organization using the standard

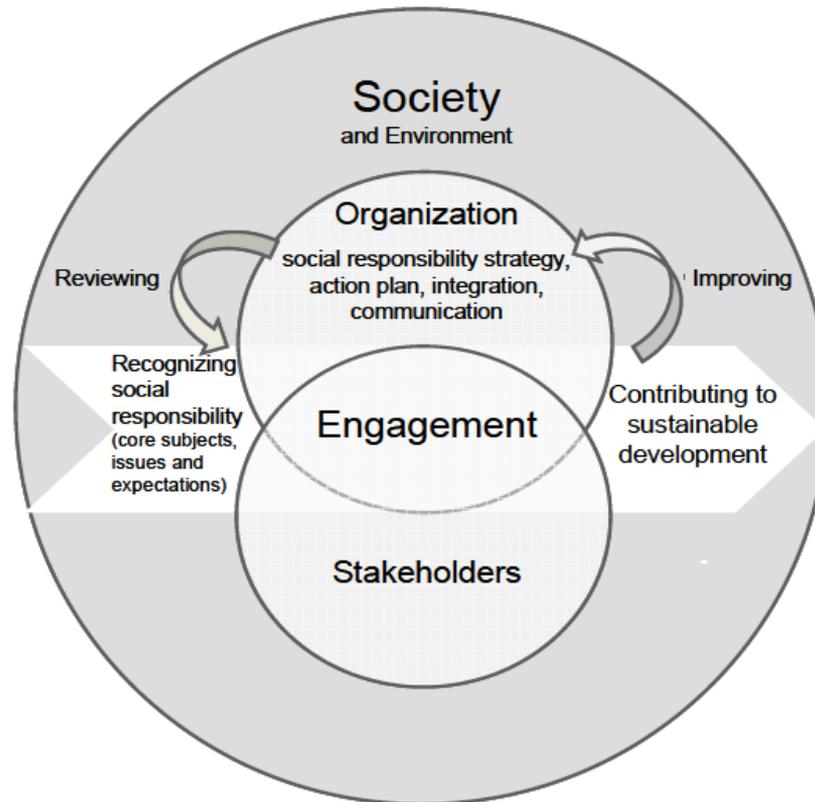
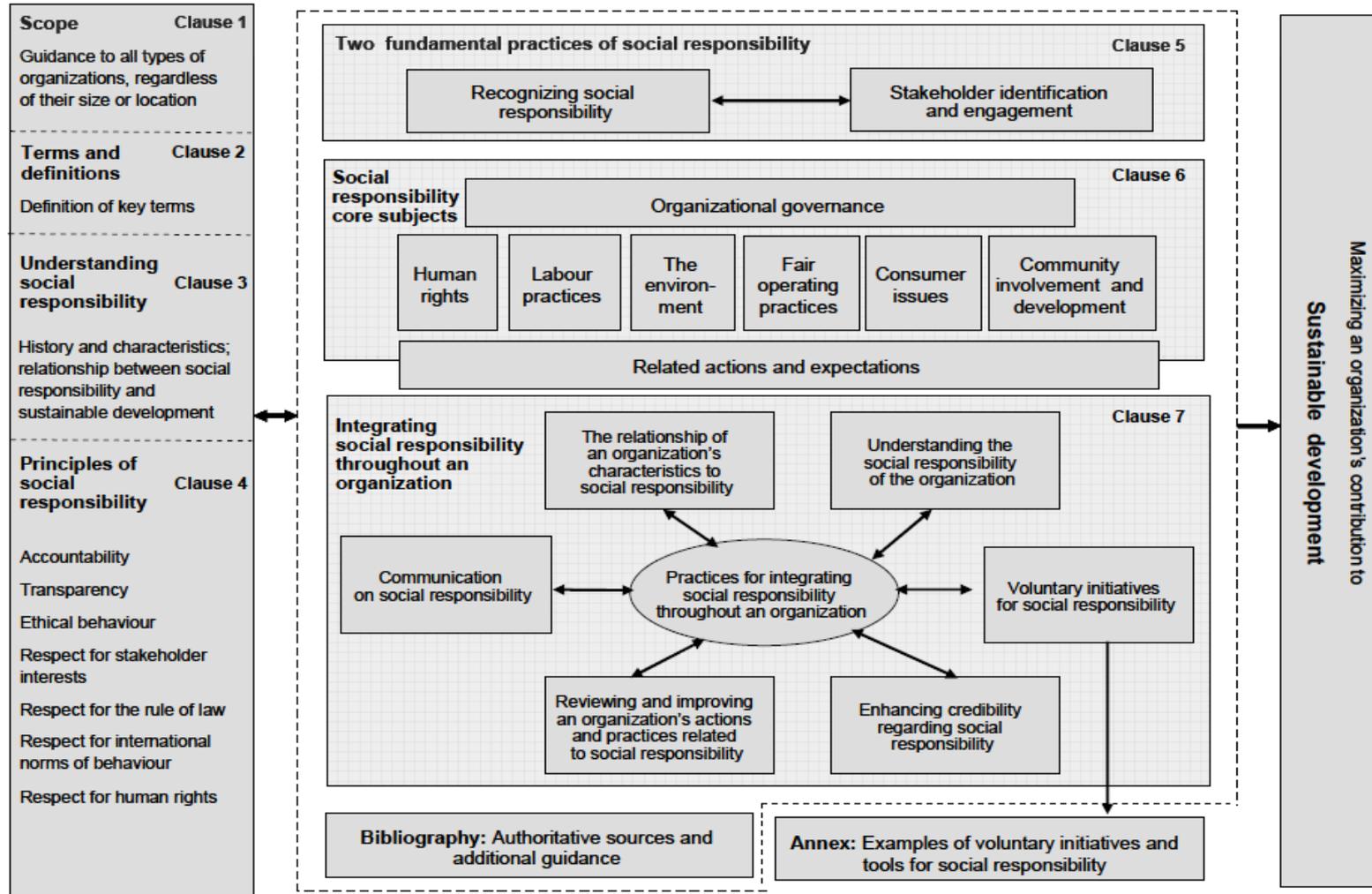


Figure 4 — Integrating social responsibility throughout the organization

Figure 1 in ISO 26000:2010 offers a schematic overview of the steps an organization is expected to take.





How ISO assisted the pilot organizations

1. Pilot organizations (POs) and national project experts (NEs) were identified together with the NSBs
2. The top management of the selected POs expressed commitment towards the application of ISO 26000
3. ISO appointed international experts (IEs) to build capacity of the NEs through training, refresher training, country visits and distance mentoring
4. NEs with the support of the IEs assisted POs by providing technical advise during the project period to apply ISO 26000 resulting in:
 - developing project deliverables such as gap-analysis, action plan, stakeholders map, progress reports, etc.
 - providing training and awareness raising events for the staff



Cairo Chamber of Commerce

- **Type of organisation:** Semi Governmental Public organisation
- **Main activities:** Managing more than 450,000 Traders, The chamber services are categorized into:
 - ✓ Supplying various certificates organizing the exercise of trade, including (Certificate to Practice - Certificate of Origin).
 - ✓ Working towards improving the performance of various business activities via trade branches since the Chamber is house to more than 60 branches.
 - ✓ Preparing researches, economic surveys and monthly reports aiming to have a better insight into the general market state and solving issues within it.
 - ✓ Improving the trade exchange through contacting the involved organizations.
 - ✓ Notifying the Chamber's members of fairs and economic conferences; local and international alike.
 - ✓ Settling disputes which arise between commercial bodies; having an arbitration department within the Chamber.
 - ✓ Holding training sessions, educational and guiding courses to serve small and medium-sized businesses; via the **Retail Training Academy** also within the Chamber.
 - ✓ Supplying traders with the "One Stop" service; through the Excellence Center (Tamyoz).
- **Location:** Cairo, Egypt
- **Number of employees:** 370
- **Annual budget / turnover :** Non Profit Organisation
- **Number of members :** +450,000 members
- **Website:** <http://en.cairochamber.org.eg> / <http://en.cairochamber.org.eg/socialres.aspx>



How we used ISO 26000:2010

In Cairo Chamber of Commerce we Used and Developed the ISO 26000 through unique procedures such as:

- The chairman decree to form the **Sustainable Business Committee** issued in May 2013 , to include an equal representation of all departments and genders in the chamber. The main role of the committee is to act as the ISO 26000 SR developing team, Headed by the Chamber's Chief Executive and Directed by the Chamber's Chairman to facilitate its mission.
- In Feb 2014, a **Sustainable Business Work Group** was formed to act solely in following up the activities of the Sustainable Business Committee and support the implementation process of the Defined action plan..
- We created the work group themes that involves participants from discussion issue related departments as well as business sectors and related stakeholders for in focus discussion to specific issues. The outcomes of the discussion work groups are to be reported to the Sustainable Business Committee to consider in its action plan related.
- We committed to stakeholders roundtables discussions to involve our stakeholders in all related actions to develop the ISO 26000 SR implementation in the chamber.
- We assigned social responsibility page in our website that reflects all information related to the Chamber SR activities and highlight all related events and responsible changes that we take.



Our vision and mission

Our vision

Cairo Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the development of a prosperous economic climate that will enhance commercial growth and the quality of life for its stakeholders and to contribute to sustainable economical, Social & Environmental development of Egypt

Our mission

Cairo Chamber of commerce recognizes it is the voice of a unified-business community, and that by becoming active in several varied arenas it can achieve these goals and objectives:

To play a significant role in the expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new enterprises that will create jobs and result in economic growth for the country

To act as the leading services' facilitator and a voice for merchants and traders within the governorate of Cairo and Egypt at large

To provide benefits that will assist member businesses in becoming successful economic entities and maintain their business' sustainability.

solely protect member's rights of having mutual opportunities of development considering sustainability and responsible business as the core component in its relations to its stakeholders.

Along the ISO 26000 Project,

The chamber identified its vision and mission to be more efficiently inclusive to generate its services to act beyond the direct beneficiaries to include areas of development in the community and as a resource for developing responsible business with its members.



Our values and policies

Our Values

- We value the **entrepreneurial spirit**. We deliver programs, services and products of the highest quality that support the needs of businesses at every stage of development.
- We value a **level playing field**, where everyone has an opportunity to succeed. We work to create a business climate that attracts new investment and enhances growth and expansion opportunities for existing companies
- We value **integrity**. We adhere to the highest of ethical standards.
- We value **community**. We connect businesses to each other, to prospective customers and to essential resources. We facilitate connections that lead to long-term business relationships built on trust.
- We value **sustainability**. We provide resources to help our community become more eco-friendly.
- We value **diversity**. We respect the variety of people, businesses and ideas in our community and consider this diversity to be an advantage.

Our Policy

Our Policy Procedures are into:

- Working towards improving the performance of various business activities via trade branches.
- Aiming to have a better insight into the general market state and solving issues within.
- Improving the trade exchange through contacting the involved organizations.
- Settling disputes which arise between commercial bodies

Along the process

Along the ISO 26000 Project,

of ISO 26000 we could direct our values and policies to be more inclusive and to consider larger scale of development that maintain sustainability and include wider stakeholder as well.



Our stakeholders

Our Stakeholder

Our stakeholders according to the mapping process are mainly:

- Board of Directors (Randomly elected board that outline our policies implementations)
- Employees (the heart of our operation)
- Traders (more than 490,000 traders of different sectors)
- Ministry of trade and industry (Our main source of operation as we commit to it by law)
- Federation of chamber of commerce
- Cairo Governorate
- Other Stakeholders of different categories assigned as per level of impact of both sides.

Along the ISO 26000 Project

The Chamber could efficiently identify its stakeholders based on the mapping process that clarified for us a clear picture related to stakeholders and helped us in making our priorities and level of engagement for more responsible and efficient practice.

Our Stakeholders are fully engaged in our operation in different forms as:

- Consultancy groups
- Chamber's website and information platform
- Emails communications



Our most significant issues (3 examples) to be linked with the strategic targets

Our most significant issues

1. In terms of corporate governance

- The every 4 years elected board from traders weaken the implementation process of decisions specially in the long term plans.
- The lack of communication between the board and the organisation as of the organisation representation only goes through the executive director as one representation that loose its capacity in decisions making.

2. In terms of labour Practices

- The internal operation misses training plans for labour development and refining the recruiting process and conditions.

3. In terms of fair operating practices

- The chamber involves initial practices of Anti-Corruption and fair operation practices that maintain safe practicing environment as per the low, Yet missing with a clear plan to raise awareness and include motivating actions.



Our revised strategic targets based on the most significant issues

1. Reconstruct the entire communication process and decision making to cope with the guidelines of the SR that will impact as of more efficient communication and better results
2. Develop training plans 2014-2017 for labour development and refining the recruiting process and conditions. .
3. Develop fair operation practices through a clear plan focusing on Anti-corruption practices that extend to include the member traders and expand through the chamber' sphere of influence to most.

Target 1

Reconstruct the entire communication process and decision making to cope with the guidelines of the SR that will impact as of more efficient communication and better results

Planned actions

1. Produced a governance code for the Board of Directors of the Chamber to put into consideration including the principles of the social responsibility while pointing out the strategic plans of the Chamber and its results at large.
2. Increase representation from the chamber on board to include heads of trade sectors.
3. Develop regular monthly meetings with all department managers and quarterly meetings to include employees of the chamber.

Follow up so far

- Governance code for the board of directors issued and approved by the chairman.
- Increasing representation in the board of directors meeting is planned to include heads of trade sectors up on the upcoming board election in June 2015.
- Monthly meetings with department managers started from Jan 2015 and assigned to be on the first Tuesday of every month. The quarterly suggested meeting with employees is planned to start after the upcoming election of the board.

Target 2

Develop training plans 2014-2017 for labour development and refining the recruiting process and conditions.

Planned actions

1. Developing a training plan 2014/2017 to develop employees technical, ethical and social skills considering the impact that will enhance the chamber's role in developing its services quality and practices
2. Define new recruitment plan including regulations placed by our legal department to act through competition and public announcement followed by examinations to ensure the efficiency and transparency of the process
3. Qualifying number of the chamber's employees to be SR fully aware and being able to promote the ISO26000 via our large impact on traders

Follow up so far

- Technical and ethical capacity building trainings for both employees and traders been executed and processing according to the training plan through the chamber's Academy.
- A decree from the chairman been issued for new recruitment procedures that commits to transparency and cope with the guidelines of the SR.
- A TOT been conducted for 18 selected young employees on ISO 26000 to become the core point of developing SR among the traders.

Target 3

Develop the chamber's fair operation practices through a clear plan focusing on Anti- corruption practices that extend to include the member traders and expand through the chamber' sphere of influence to most.

Planned actions

1. Producing the Honor Charter for traders to commit to their social responsibility along their practices.
2. Developing the chamber's code of conduct to apply in its operation.
3. Develop Anti-Corruption mechanism to prevent corruption actions and identify and inform running ones.
4. Enhance the technological communication tools to maintain announcement of all activities internally and externally in a transparent way that minimize corruption related activities to zero tolerance.

Follow up so far

- Charter of honor been issued, printed and handed to traders who come to the chamber for work issues, as well as been announced on the chamber's website.
- Chamber's code of conduct been issued and announced by a decree from the chairman to be in use immediately as committing to all employees in the chamber.
- New instructions been addressed from the chairman to the IT department to generate all information to all employees by email and to make sure that such information reaches to all stakeholders at large through the website.



Our main steps of integrating ISO 26000 - Focus on revised governance, systems and procedures (1/5)

- Developed a framework determining the vision, mission and practices of the Chamber that commits solely to the SR
- Commit the transparency as a core value in all communications and practices in the chamber
- Moreover following the law regulations as a semi-governmental entity, the chamber enforced the commitment to the human rights principles, labour rights and gender diversity at work.



Our main steps of integrating ISO 26000 - Focus on measurements, monitoring and reporting of SR performance (2/5)

- Regular surveys to measure the level of our practices and its impact.
- Enable online commenting tool for our stakeholders to take part through their comments on our services and quality as well.
- As recently involving the ISO 26000 we commit to research on similar case studies to enhance our assigned methods of actions and pre-evaluate impacts.
- One of our major parts to define our KPIs is what is achieved versus what is planned and we develop our vision for the future phases in relation to learned lessons from the first phase.
- Our ISO mirror committee is a major tool to evaluate our practices and develop the related findings that we rely on to enhance our practices.
- Committing to a third party auditing entities to evaluate our progress and implementations ensuring they are on the right track, which is a recently planned practice and in discussion with the board of directors specially in the issues of Governance, Environment and Anti- Corruption.
- Committing to report annually on our SR and sustainability in our website as well as a printed copy to be distributed among traders and employees.



Our main steps of integrating of ISO 26000 - Focus on sphere of influence (3/5)

- Awareness raising session for traders by sector.
- Roundtables for large traders to gain commitment and develop the awareness related to ISO 26000
- Announcing regarding the ISO26000 SR in trade events related to the chamber.
- Creating integrated on line page in our website focusing on SR
- Producing the honor charter that is committing to all traders from all sectors and refers to the ISO 26000.
- Jointly work with other partners to develop the knowledge related to the importance of ISO26000 and the benefits of following such guidelines.



Our main steps of integrating ISO 26000 - Focus on training and communication (4/5)

Internal training/communication

- Developing awareness sessions through the chamber's academy to University student on Social responsibility and ISO 26000
- Raising the awareness of all chamber's employee through information session conducted internally.
- Created a platform of communication to update all employees on significant issues related to SR through email system and online website
- TOT on ISO 26000 been conducted for selected employees to develop and raise awareness among the employees and traders.

External training/communication

- Jointly with other partners we developed info sessions in focus on some of the main subjects of the ISO 26000 (consumer rights, labour rights, Child labour.....)
- Provide printed materials on SR in our events and other partner events to share increasing awareness raising of ISO 26000.



Our main steps of integrating ISO 26000 - Focus on SR related initiatives (5/5)

- Developed agreement with partners for more Socially responsible initiatives as of relocating street vendors to specific markets for better and more responsible practices.
- Acting as a middle man in reaching tax accounting agreements between business owners and the tax authority.
- Participating in the social efforts to support victims of natural crises such as (Avian flu – Victims of torrents -“support the poor student” initiative – “medical glasses for the poor” initiative – “rehabilitation of the homeless children” initiative)
- Developing the poultry shops by offering loans to enhance their situations.
- Establishing poultry processing plants outside the residential zone of Cairo



Our recommendations & lessons learned

Our recommendation comes for all organizations and specially to our affiliates chambers of commerce to seriously commit to the ISO 26000 Social Responsibility Guide lines as of the perception and reality of an organization's performance on social responsibility can influence, among other things:

- Competitive advantage
- Reputation
- Ability to attract and retain workers or members, customers, clients or users
- Maintenance of employees' morale, commitment and productivity
- View of investors, owners, donors, sponsors and the financial community
- Relationship with companies, governments, the media, suppliers, peers, customers and the community in which it operates.

Along the implementation of ISO 26000 in the chamber we clearly learned that, the whole issue of success relies on sustainability which is the core part of achievements and to reach beyond success. Sustainability as a term to become a reality needs commitment in a specific form and this form is simply best shaped in the ISO 26000 SR guidelines.