



The Middle East Partnership Initiative

Developing Economic Opportunity

"We seek to support civil society efforts worldwide because we believe that civil society helps to make communities more prosperous and stable. It helps to drive economic growth that benefits the greatest number of people."
 Secretary Clinton - Forum for the Future - November 2, 2009

The **Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)**, located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program that implements President Obama's vision to directly engage with and invest in the people of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works with local and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments to create vibrant partnerships between the citizens of the U.S. and MENA to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the region.

The sustained development and prosperity of the MENA region depends on national and local governments, domestic firms, and private individuals and enterprises having the tools to create their economic futures. MEPI sponsors a series of economic projects that work hand-in-hand with all of these groups to create a framework for sustained growth.

PROMOTING TRADE & INVESTMENT

MEPI helps MENA economies connect to the world economy and access the advantages of the international trading system. To this end, MEPI supports the implementation of trade agreements that the U.S. has signed with partners in the region to improve opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. MEPI also supports private sector development to take advantage of trade opportunities, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, which are the engine of employment and economic growth.

COMMERCIAL, JUDICIAL, & LEGAL REFORM

Attracting trade and investment demands a clear, consistent, transparent, and impartial regulatory framework. Through projects focused on promoting international best practices, MEPI is helping to improve the investment climate and thus encouraging business growth throughout the MENA region.



Examples of MEPI Economic Projects

The Center for International Private Enterprise – The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) works with the governments and private sectors in Bahrain, Tunisia, and Yemen to assist companies in their efforts to adopt international standards of good corporate governance; provide recommendations for related institutional, legal, and judicial reforms; and raise public awareness of the need for better corporate governance.

The Financial Services Volunteer Corps – The Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC) works with central banks and ministries of finance in Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Yemen to promote macroeconomic stability and growth. Through these partnerships, FSVC helps the countries design growth-oriented fiscal and macroeconomic policies that also promote stability. FSVC conducts training and provides technical assistance to strengthen commercial banking sectors, stimulate the flow of credit and other financial services to small and medium-sized enterprises, and improve the legal, regulatory and supervisory environment of financial institutions. These measures are aimed at enhancing private sector economic growth and consequent increases in employment.

The Commercial Law and Development Program – Through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), MEPI plays a key role in helping to reform the legal framework for commercial activity and maximizing the mutual benefit of U.S. Free Trade Agreements in the region. This work includes: assistance with legislative changes; bilateral training in international commercial law; workshops aimed to reduce technical barriers to trade; and technical assistance with bankruptcy, title, collateral, and dispute resolution.

Trade Capacity Building – International Executive Service Corps (IESC) is completing a project designed to strengthen the ability of public and private sector stakeholders in selected MENA countries to engage effectively with counterparts regarding issues related to bilateral or multilateral trade policy. IESC works with partners Booz Allen Hamilton and the Institute for Trade and Commercial Diplomacy to deliver targeted training modules to increase the trading capacity of MENA firms.



