



# Newsletter

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E/ESCWA/ETC/2023/NEWSLETTER



## Latest news

### Arab SME Summit

*[Amman, 30 October–1 November 2022]*

Under the patronage of Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, ESCWA held the first Arab SME Summit at the Kempinski Convention Centre in Amman from 30 October to 1 November 2022, on the theme “Opportunities beyond borders”. The Summit aimed to provide new opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Arab region to expand and position themselves for future progress and growth, and to access regional and international markets.

The Summit brought together around 650 participants, including policymakers, entrepreneurs, investors, business influencers, economists, journalists, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental





organizations and donors. At the close of the Summit, ESCWA announced its partners' commitment to provide funding to SMEs to the tune of \$130 million.

## Restoring Hope challenge

The closing ceremony of the first Arab SME Summit, held on 1 November 2022, provided an opportunity to present awards to the winners of the Restoring Hope challenge, which ESCWA launched in early 2022. The challenge aimed to identify innovative ideas that could help millions of people across the Arab region to reclaim hope in their societies, restore belief in a dignified and prosperous future, and revive their will to assume a role in shaping that future.

The winners are Yasmein Ali Abdelghany from Egypt and Eliane El Haber from Lebanon, with their idea "244 Lights of Hope". The concept of this mental health assistance idea is based on the shared human need

## Opportunities

### eCommerce Acceleration Programme

In December 2022, ESCWA launched the second eCommerce Acceleration Programme (eCAP), with the support of the ICC-ESCWA Centre of Entrepreneurship, to empower Arab SMEs through their transition journey into online selling.

to accept wounds, learn to cope with them, and strive for healing.

### Startups Facing Hardship challenge

In the summer of 2022, we asked you to tell the story of your company. What difficulties did you face during the founding and development of your enterprise, and how did you overcome them? From all the submissions, we were able to choose one lucky winner, **iRole**, founded by Sawsan Lubani.

iRole is the first integrated platform in the Arab region that focuses on empowering women in the world of work as freelancers or remote workers, by connecting them with remote job opportunities. It provides key employment skills and self-development online courses and tools, and connects women with educational and professional opportunities worldwide.

eCAP aims to build the capacity of up to 100 SMEs from the Arab region to transition into online selling, either by developing their transactional e-commerce websites or by selling on existing online marketplaces. Participating SMEs will benefit from business and technical expertise, critical setup assistance to build/optimize their online platforms or sell on existing virtual marketplaces, one-on-one coaching, and exposure and access to networking opportunities.



Eligible SMEs must:

- Be registered and operational in an Arab country.
- Have a working product or service that can be sold online.
- Have an online presence on social media or an existing website.
- Be willing to dedicate one or two team members to the project.

The online application form is available in [Arabic](#) and [English](#).

Deadline for applications is 28 February 2023.

## Community announcements

This is your space. Here we publish announcements, vacancies, requests and success stories from the DEPAR community. Click here to submit your announcements:

<https://depar.unescwa.org/form/community-announcements-contribu>

We are looking forward to your contributions.

### Success stories



**Rabt**, which participated in the Arab SME Summit, is a downloadable application for Android and iOS that brings together the world's best Islamic content and content creators on-demand in a single app. It considers itself as

### Josour

ESCWA launched the *Josour* initiative, in partnership with the Union of Arab Banks, the Union of Arab Chambers, Pharco, Elie Saab International, and the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development. The initiative aims to increase commitment to creating opportunities for unemployed young men and women, and support them in enhancing their employability prospects, such as upgrading their skills, offering them access to acquire new skills to meet the changing requirements of the future of work, and enhancing their suitability for the job market.

Currently, *Josour* offers over 80 positions in various fields in Arab countries. The following are some examples of open positions – maybe there is something for you:

- [Environment Affairs Intern at ESCWA](#)
- [Digital B2B Executive](#)
- [Quality Control Officer](#)
- [Graphic Design Intern](#)
- [Sales Expert](#)
- [Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Graphic Designer](#)
- Learn more about Josour at <https://depar.unescwa.org/josour>

an Islamic storytelling platform. Rabt has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Jazz**, the largest telecommunication company in Pakistan. Through this partnership, Rabt has accessed 73 million subscribers in Pakistan. The DEPAR team congratulates and wishes Rabt continued success!

### Surveys

ESCWA is working on a pilot study on social and economic equity in food security. The goal is to determine if food habits have changed recently owing to global and regional events. Please spare three minutes to complete the form in [English](#) or in [Arabic](#).

# Get to know the DEPAR community



In each issue of our newsletter, we feature a company represented at DEPAR. To kick things off, we are pleased to

introduce you to [Shabab Lab](#).

Shabab Lab is the first social innovation e-learning platform in the Arab region. They aim to give young

people a place to tinker, learn, innovate and create their own technology solutions, which will change their communities and help make the world a better place.

Shabab Lab is funded by Riyadh for Social Innovation SAL.

Do you have any questions, or would you like to collaborate? You can contact Shabab Lab directly [here](#).

<https://depar.unescwa.org/>

*We wish you all a happy new year 2023!*



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



**VISION:** ESCWA, an innovative catalyst for a stable, just and flourishing Arab region

**MISSION:** Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice. Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.

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