



International Trade Centre



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IRAQ NATIONAL TRADE FORUM 2024

Connecting Iraqi Small Businesses to Growth Opportunities

Outcome Document



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Business
Forum**



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The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

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IRAQ NATIONAL TRADE FORUM 2024

Connecting Iraqi Small Businesses to Growth Opportunities

Baghdad, Iraq





Declaration of the Ministry of Trade of Iraq

In a significant development, the Ministry of Trade (MoT) of Iraq has announced three important commitments during the INTF, namely:

Sustain and Support WTO Accession

MoT has committed to enhancing cooperation with national stakeholder and international partners to meet the criteria for World Trade Organization (WTO) accession. This commitment is aimed at promoting trade-led growth and nurturing the development of the private sector.

Foster dialogue with the private sector

MoT is committed to enhancing private sector growth by regularly facilitating public-private dialogues and initiatives within commercial areas. This effort aims to address challenges, foster sustainable communication, and amplify the private sector's impact.

Facilitate collaboration with a focus on youth

MoT reaffirmed its dedication to intensifying collaborations with global economic and trade institutions. This includes forging alliances with organizations focused on capacity building, with the goal of developing effective programs that support Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) and facilitate the economic integration of youth.



Atheer Al-Ghurair
Minister of Trade of Iraq

"The 2nd INTF stands as a testament to our collective ambition to foster dialogue, coherence, and cooperation between the public and private sectors. Iraq is on a journey to catalyze business partnerships and secure sustained investment, navigating through the economic challenges to unlock the full potential of Iraq's business environment. As we unite Iraqi micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises with international suppliers and investors, we are laying the groundwork for a robust public-private strategy. The Ministry of Trade is committed to accelerating Iraq's integration into the global economy through WTO accession, ensuring a future where Iraq thrives as a key player in the multilateral trading system, adhering to international standards for a more prosperous and investment-friendly environment."



The opening ceremony of the Iraq National Trade Forum 2024



"International trade presents a very good opportunity for Iraq to revitalize its agricultural sector, diversify its economy, and achieve sustainable economic growth. By fostering international partnerships and leveraging its agricultural potential, Iraq can become a player in the global market and an even more important economic actor in the region. The European Union will remain a close partner of Iraq and promote its integration in global and regional markets."

Thomas Seiler
Ambassador of the European Union to Iraq



"With over one million SMEs in operation, smaller businesses account for two-thirds of Iraq's private sector jobs. And they provide much more than that: they deliver crucial goods and services for the functioning of the local economy and for the wellbeing of its communities. As hundreds of Iraqi companies connect with buyers and investors at the Forum, they contribute to sustainable, trade-led development in the country and beyond."

Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Executive Director,
International Trade Centre



"The success of the Second Iraq National Trade Forum underscores the vital role of Iraqi SMEs in driving economic growth and sustainable development. Through fostering partnerships and promoting innovation, we are paving the way for a more prosperous future for Iraq. The UN is committed to supporting Iraq's journey towards economic diversification and resilience, highlighting the importance of collaboration at all levels. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive economy that benefits all Iraqis."

Ghulam Mohammad Isaczai
Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General,
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator



IRAQ NATIONAL TRADE FORUM 2024

Iraq's agriculture and agri-food sectors have the potential to contribute to the growth and diversification, job creation, and enhanced sustainability, particularly by responding to needs of the domestic market. The business opportunity is considerable, as consumer demand for fresh and processed agricultural produce is rising. Local firms struggle to compete in the local market, representing a missed opportunity for economic growth and job creation, as more than 170,000 thousand jobs could be generated by seizing this domestic market potential with a moderate growth rate scenario of agricultural production, according to ITC research.

Spearheaded by the Government of Iraq and generously supported by the European Union, the Iraq National Trade Forum (INTF) returned in 2024 for its second year. This edition of the INTF was organized by the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, with the instrumental support of both the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq.

KEY OUTCOMES



Expanded business networks and new business deals

The INTF connected Iraqi SMEs specializing in agriculture, food processing, packaging, and logistics with international and regional suppliers and investors.



Knowledge sharing and collaboration

The INTF fostered the exchange of global best practices, particularly in sustainable agriculture and SME support, and encouraged collaborative efforts among participants.



Stakeholder engagement

The INTF brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to engage in comprehensive dialogue and collaboration.



Business priorities in fragile settings on global agenda

Launched at the INTF, the 2023 SMECO report highlights specific actions that small businesses and states can take to blunt the impact of fragility.



Policy advocacy and consensus building

The INTF served as a vehicle for advocating policy progress and creating consensus among stakeholders.



Setting future agendas

The INTF identified key actions for future focus, particularly in enhancing Iraq's trade strategy and SME development in the agri-food sector.



Empowering Trade: 13 high-level panels mobilizing 75 prominent experts illuminate key topics at Iraq National Trade Forum

Advancing Policy Reform and Trade Integration: Iraq National Trade Forum spotlights WTO accession progress and global market connectivity



Agri-Food Exhibition: Companies from 18 governorates display the full range of Iraq's quality and diversity at National Trade Exhibition

Global Debut: ITC launches 'SME Competitiveness Outlook' at Iraq National Trade Forum



Strategic Growth: Iraqi Government unveils the Potato Sector Strategy at Iraq National Trade Forum



Introducing 'By Iraqi Hands': A new collective label celebrates and elevates locally-grown Iraqi products



INTF IN NUMBERS



The Forum

2nd edition of the INTF connected Iraqi SMEs in farming, food processing, packaging and logistics to international suppliers and investors.

People



1035 Registrations

800 Participants

75

Expert Speakers

24%

Women ticket buyers

56

Exhibitors

50%

Youth ticket buyers under 35

Organizations



400+ Iraqi companies

219

Iraqi Government Representatives

21

International companies

B2B Meetings



USD 5.8 M In potential deal value

240

Business to Business meetings conducted linking

180+

Companies

INTF IN NUMBERS

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Number of companies that initiated investment opportunities

108

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Number of companies that initiated a business partnership

117

CHANGES TO BUSINESS PRACTICES

Percentage of companies reporting that they may take action and introduce changes in their business practices as a result of B2B sessions

81%

IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE

Percentage of companies reporting improved knowledge that will be useful to their work as a result of B2B sessions

91%

IMPROVED AWARENESS OF BUSINESS & TRADE

Percentage of companies reporting that they have a greater awareness of business and trade as a result of B2B sessions

84%

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Percentage of companies reporting overall satisfaction with B2B event

96%



"It was a privilege to participate in the B2B meetings at INTF 2024. I have actively contributed to various innovations, with a notable achievement being the development of a vein detection device. This device, manufactured from cost-effective materials, has proven highly successful.

Through B2B meetings, I had the opportunity to interact with the German Liaison office in Iraq which has paved the way for a promising collaboration in the realm of cutting-edge medical equipment. This collaboration and partnership would not have been possible without the INTF."

Abulfadhel Alabbas Mohammed Qasim,
Al-Qasim Green University

"I have attended many Forums and events designed to help build opportunities for SMEs. But the ITC team ensures that if a business requests help or support that they will be heard! I had the opportunity to meet many local businesses through B2B sessions during INTF and all were prepared and had products/ideas that were marketable and as well they were considerate of the environment.

At INTF 2022 I was eager to meet with PepsiCo about our projects, including a potato farm near Erbil and a farming community in Diwaniyah Governorate focused on food security, nature-based solutions, and water conservation. We are so pleased to announce that as a result of our meeting with PepsiCo we were introduced to Green Iraq Co (GICO) and have now secured a potato seed pilot for our client at Palani Farms in Qushtapa, Iraq".

Arleen Mitchell,
Founder/President of MS Innovation Lab



Media & Social Media



10

Press coverages

19 412

INTF, ITC LinkedIn posts impressions

6, 03 %

Social Media engagement rate

2 000

Livestream viewers lifetime

COVERAGE BRIEFING

February 23, 2024 View in Browser

Media Briefing

[CLICK HERE](#)

Mentions of Interest

[ITC hosts Iraq National Trade Forum](#) February 23, 2024

With support from the government of Iraq, the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), organized a two-day trade forum to help Iraqi businesses to identify and develop trade opportu ...

[A New Dawn in Baghdad: EU and UN Partner to Propel Iraqi Youth Towards Prosperity](#) February 23, 2024

Explore the BEIT program in Iraq, a groundbreaking initiative that addresses the scarcity of decent work opportunities and the need for affordable housing, offering a pathway to prosperity for the nation's youth and vulnerable populations.

[ITC Hosts Iraq National Trade Forum](#) February 23, 2024

With support from the government of Iraq, the International Trade Centre (ITC) , a joint agency of the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) , organized a two-day trade forum to help Iraqi businesses to identify and develop trade oppor ...

[Joint Programme Launched to Stimulate Decent Work and Affordable Housing in Iraq](#) February 23, 2024

A multi-partner programme to foster decent work opportunities for Iraqi youth and addressing the need for affordable housing, especially among lower-income and vulnerable populations was launched in Baghdad today. The European Union has provided 20 million ...

[A New Dawn in Baghdad: EU and UN Partner to Propel Iraqi Youth Towards Prosperity](#) BNN Breaking Momen Zellimi February 22, 2024

Explore the BEIT program in Iraq, a groundbreaking initiative that addresses the scarcity of decent work opportunities and the need for affordable housing, offering a pathway...

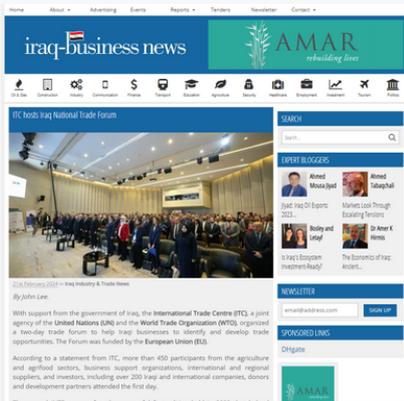
[Joint Programme Launched to Stimulate Decent Work and Affordable Housing in Iraq \[EN/AR\]](#)

INTF IN THE NEWS

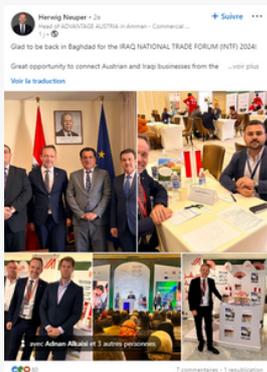
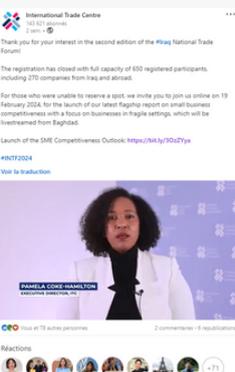


العراق اختتام أعمال منتدى التجارة الوطني لدعم المشاريع الصغيرة

رأه محمد شياع السوداني يؤكد خلال مؤتمر صحفي أن مبررات وجود التحالف الدواي في العراق انتهت بشن



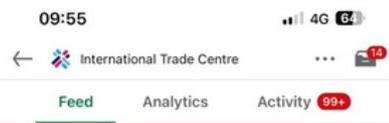
Zahraa Witwit et 7 autres personnes



Ki Nguyen et 27 autres personnes



KORRENDIA BAZIRGANIYA NISTIMANIYA IRAQE BIRIWE DICE



Posted by Zhaocan (Skylar) Li · 1/26/24



Happening now
Launch of the ITC flagship report on small businesses in fragility
LinkedIn Live

Ellie Rabarison, Sarayu Krishnan and 147 other attendees

Summary of takeaways and recommendations

To shape Iraq's future development and stability, a holistic trade strategy is essential. This should encompass a full spectrum of interventions, from nurturing a robust domestic market to active global market participation. Key initiatives should include boosting local production, enhancing infrastructure, and simplifying regulatory frameworks for smoother international integration of products and services in which Iraq has competitive strengths. As Iraq navigates its path towards economic revitalization, the critical role of SMEs cannot be overstated.

Policy Reform and Regulatory Environment

Simplify regulations and streamline processes to make it easier for SMEs to start and operate businesses. This includes standardizing and reducing bureaucratic hurdles, ensuring transparent procedures and raising awareness about the benefits of formalization.

Access to Finance

Improve access to affordable financing for SMEs by encouraging the development of credit facilities and loan products tailored for small businesses, and by supporting microfinance institutions. Consider offering government-backed guarantees to reduce the risk for lenders.

Capacity Building and Training

Invest in and connect training programs, particularly in TVET, to enhance the skills of SME entrepreneurs and their workforce, focusing on areas like business management, digital literacy, export procedures and sustainable agricultural practices. This should be responsive to needs of women, youth, and vulnerable populations.

Market Access and Trade Facilitation

Assist SMEs in accessing new domestic and international markets. This can involve supporting compliance with export standards, providing information on trade agreements, and facilitating participation in trade fairs and missions. Help them integrate into local and global value chains by connecting them with larger businesses and exporters, and supporting cluster/alliance development.

Infrastructure Development

Improve rural and agricultural infrastructure, such as roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems, to reduce costs and losses for agri-business SMEs.

Innovation and Technology Adoption

Encourage the adoption of modern technologies in agriculture and trade. This includes digital tools for market access, climate-smart agricultural technologies, and efficient supply chain management systems.

Incentives for Sustainable Practices

Offer incentives for SMEs that adopt environmentally-sustainable and socially-responsible practices, such as organic farming, renewable energy usage, and fair labor standards.

Enhancing governmental coordination and alignment to prioritize trade-led growth and private sector development is essential. A concerted focus on SMEs by both the government and international community is critical for achieving an inclusive economic recovery, with emphasis on empowering youth and women.

Spotlight on

SME Competitiveness Outlook 2023 edition (SMECO) Global Launch Event

[CLICK HERE](#)

Speakers

- H.E. Ahmed Al-Asadi, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Government of Iraq
- Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Iraq
- Eric Buchot, Head of Country Program, SAAVI, International Trade Centre
- Maha Kattaa, Country Coordinator, International Labour Organization
- Barbara Ramos (facilitator), Chief of Research and Strategies for Exports, ITC
- Zahraa Zaid (facilitator), Project Manager for Second up sustainable fashion

Highlights

- The SMECO 2023 assessed the impact of conflict and fragility on business performance. It argues, based on novel firm-level data collected in eight countries including Iraq, that direct support to firms is helpful and must be complemented by reforms to promote peace and stability and improve the business environment.
- Session speakers shared their experiences on how to better support SMEs in fragile and conflict-affected settings, guided by the findings of SMECO.

Potato Sector Development Strategy - Official Launch

Speakers

- Dr. Mahdi Sahar al Joubori, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), government of Iraq
- Laetitia van Asch, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Mauro Gioe, Programme manager - Cooperation Section, Delegation of the European Union to Iraq (EUD)
- Karla Solis, Trade Programme Officer, ITC

Highlights

- The Potato Sector Strategy was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture. It was based on a comprehensive approach to understand the dynamics of the sector, including farm and firm-level surveys, field observations, factory visits and direct insights from Iraqi consumers, main firms in the sector and market actors, as well as the valuable technical support from the International Potato Center.
- The Strategy provides clear strategic direction for a transformed potato sector that drives economic advancement, employment generation and addresses food security in Iraq.

Official launch ceremony of the "By Iraqi Hands" national brand

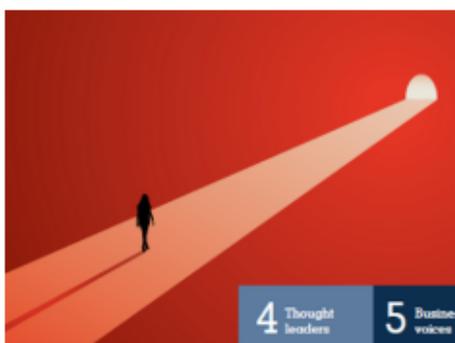
What does "By Iraqi Hands" stand for?

The "By Iraqi Hands" label is more than just a logo; it's a symbol of pride, quality, and heritage. The label represents a commitment to celebrating the best of Iraqi-made products, encouraging consumers to choose locally-sourced products, and supporting the country's food industry.

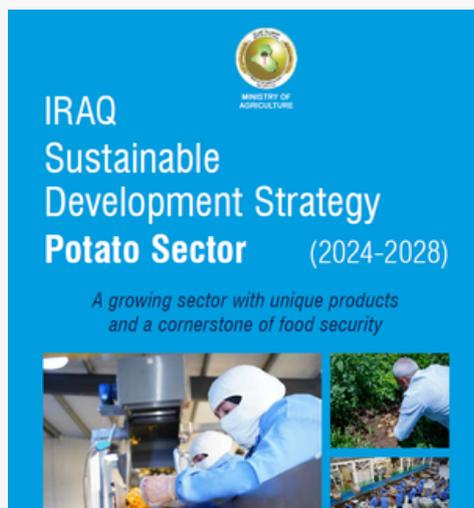
Showcasing the best of the Iraqi food industry



The INTF 2024 was a celebration of the Iraqi food industry, and the "By Iraqi Hands" label played a central role in the forum.



Small Businesses in Fragility: From Survival to Growth



Plenary and Side Sessions Highlights and Takeaways

Plenary session: Iraq's Trade- Led Economic Transformation: Pathways to Shared Inclusive Trade-Led

Growth

Speakers

- Abdulrazak Al-Zahiri, President, IFCC
- Tharwat Akram Salman, Deputy Director General of the Foreign Economic Relations Department
- Kadhim AL-Shamari Member of Iraqi Parliament, Parliamentary Committee on Economy, Industry and Trade
- Barbara Ramos (facilitator), Chief of Research and Strategies for Exports, ITC

Recommendations and highlights

- Trade does not happen in a vacuum. It requires a whole ecosystem of laws, regulations, supportive services and a strong private sector to become a reality.
- Trade can be used to leverage domestic reforms through international commitments. Iraq's WTO accession process is fostering the internalization of these commitments.
- The private sector is central to these developments, playing a key role in shaping the future legislative and reform agenda.



"Impact in the field" The SAAVI Alliances: a replicable model for profitable agri food production in rural areas of Iraq

Speakers

- Zahraa Witwit (facilitator), SAAVI National Project Manager, ITC
- Ahmed Husain, Vice chairman, Greenland Agribusiness Alliance
- Abdifatah Issack, Project Manager, NRC
- Nazar Yahya, Farmer, AL-Hadbaa Agribusiness Alliance
- Dr. Nadeem Khadem, Ministry of Agriculture
- Nashwan Abdul Kareem, Farmer, Dijlla AlKhair Alliance
- Ali Ismael Rahman, Merchandising Manager, Carrefour Iraq
- Nawfal Yousif Karim Al-Dodan, Farmer, Al Zubair Alliance
- Ahmed Khalaf, General Manager, BEPP
- Dr. Haidar Adnan Hassan, Head of Animal Production Department in Basra, Directorate of Agriculture

Recommendations and highlights

- A shift in farmers' mindsets is crucial for adopting a more market-oriented strategy.
- It's essential to not only connect farmer alliances with markets, but also enhance their competitiveness through a comprehensive market system development approach.
- This approach should focus on the entire value chain, from production to market, to enable farmers to meet consumer demands and competitive market standards. By integrating productivity and quality improvements with packaging and branding enhancements, organized farmers can ensure the delivery of superior-quality products to consumers.

Cultivating Iraq's Future: Youth Employment and Human Capital Development

Speakers

- Barbara Egger, Head of Cooperation, EUD
- Faisal Kadhim Al-Saidi, DDG of Extension and Agricultural Training, Ministry of Agriculture
- Ahmad Abdulrazzaq Abdulazal, Senior Livelihood Officer, Al-Aghsan Foundation for Agriculture and Environment Development
- Ihsan Fadhil Abbas, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Anmar Mallouki, Head of public relations, Iraq federation for Chambers of Commerce
- Prof. Dr. Tariq Ali Jassim Al-Ani, Head, Office of Education, Advisory Commission at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- Elisa Molena, Head of the Mosul office, World Food Programme

Highlights

- The needs of the labour market have to be better matched with the educational system through the framework proposed (INES implementation plan for TVET in agriculture).
- Awareness raising about entrepreneurship is also about breaking clichés and, even though it can be hard and long journey, it's also very rewarding.

Recommendations:

- Provide training to key support organizations, TVETs, to better equip them to develop a new generation of trade citizens of Iraq.
- Meeting the needs of startups in terms of skills allows to gain competitiveness.

Iraq WTO accession: current progress, ambitions and future prospects

Speakers

- Tharwat Akram Salman, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Trade
- Ali Adel, Private Sector Officer, WTO Division, Ministry of Trade
- Devika Rajeev (facilitator), Trade Policy Programme Officer, ITC

Recommendations

- Provide capacity building and awareness of the private sector to prepare for the possible impact of WTO accession.
- Further political support for the WTO accession process to build on the momentum created and ensure better inter-ministerial coordination.
- Undertake a bottom up approach in awareness raising by involving youth into the discussions around WTO accession.

"Youth are the bridge to the success of Iraq."

Mr. Ahmad Abdulrazzaq Abdulazal, Senior Livelihood Officer, Al-Aghsan Foundation

Plenary and Side Sessions Highlights and Takeaways

Field lessons: how farmers and SMEs can use trade to transform food systems

Speakers

- Meshak Kimanathi, Livelihood & Economic Inclusion, UNHCR
- Ana Paula Bedoya, Livelihoods Portfolio Lead, WFP
- Ali Ismael Rahman, Merchandise Manager, Carrefour
- Abdifatah Issack, Project manager, NRC
- Oryem Peter, Agribusiness Manager, Mercy Corps
- Moi Peter Elia, Operations Manager, ITC

Recommendations

- Enhance farmers' capacity to advocate further for their needs and to take ownership of the compliance procedures when it comes to standards and certifications.
- Support financial inclusion of farmers at the policy level in Iraq and improve awareness of farmers on the options available.
- Encourage youth to engage in the farming sector to foster innovation in the sector.

Empowering a Green Iraq: Engaging Companies in Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP)

Speakers

- Abdel Rahman Alzubaidi, CEO, Ivvest
- Falah ALJubouri, Entrepreneurship Centre Manager, FICC
- Dr. Ahmed Hussain Tali, Deputy DDG Horticulture Directorate, MOA
- Bilal Rabah AL-Sugheyer, Country Resident Representative in Iraq, IFC
- Miran Dizayee, Co-founder and Director, Operations-Top Mountain
- Devika Rajeev, (facilitator), Trade Policy Programme Officer, ITC

"Embracing sustainability is not just about preserving the future; it's about unlocking the true potential of the present. Every step we take towards cleaner production and resource efficiency plants the seed for a more resilient and prosperous economy."

Abdel Rahman Alzubaidi-CEO, Ivvest

Highlights

- Adopting RECP can lead to increased competitiveness, resilience, cost reduction, higher productivity, compliance with climate regulations, access to markets, and eligibility for green financing.

Recommendations

- Increase consumer awareness about the benefits of sustainable practices to influence SMEs, and businesses awareness of the economic benefits of adopting sustainable practices to encourage their engagement in resource efficiency and cleaner production.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to create effective incentives for adopting sustainable practices.
- Financial institutions should integrate environmental and social considerations into their decision-making processes to promote sustainability.
- Explore agricultural technology, including indoor farming for its potential to contribute to sustainability in the Iraqi market.

From Farm to Fork: Ensuring Food Quality and Safety

Speakers

- Dr. Zaid Al-Rawi, Food safety specialist, Al-Nahrain University
- Azhin Abdulrahman Hamadameen, General Manager, Winsom CO
- Wasan Bahir Hashim, Talent manager / quality and hygiene manager, Carrefour Iraq
- Alyaa Issa Jumma Al-Sudani, Senior Biologist & Head of Analytical Unit at Food industry Department, COSQC \ IRAQ

Recommendations and highlights

- Iraq's history of conflict has adversely affected the soil, posing challenges to producing organic products.
- Product examination processes in laboratories should be streamlined and modernized and capacity of relevant institutions should be built to provide more extensive trainings and promote awareness on food quality and safety among farmers.
- The potential impact of certification on product pricing needs to be explored.
- Government support is essential to assist farmers in obtaining quality certification.

Investment facilitation in Iraq: balancing ambitions and reality, what lessons learned?

Speakers

- Dhafir AL Issa, Advisor to Premier Minister on Investment Seconded to National Investment Commission
- Alaa Al Khafagi, Sales Manager at Baghdad Poultry Co.
- Quan Zhao, Trade Policy Programme Officer (facilitator), ITC
- Barbara Ramos, Chief of Research and Strategies for Exports, ITC

Recommendations and highlights

- Having a strategic approach to capture investor interest is crucial, given Iraq's considerable potential to draw the right investments.
- Investment in non-oil sectors has the potential to generate employment opportunities for Iraq's rapidly growing population, particularly among youth.
- ITC has been helping countries facilitate investment, and stands ready to support the Iraqi government in making the investment processes easier and faster.



Plenary and Side Sessions Highlights and Takeaways

Unlocking Prosperity: Enhancing Access to Finance for Iraqi MSMEs (and particularly youth)

Speakers

- Falah AlJbouri, Entrepreneurship centre manager, FICC.
- Abdulhany Alhassany, Senior Investment Manager, GroFin
- Shwan Qaradgi, Iraq Programs Managing Director, 51 Labs.
- Zahraa Alsarraf, Second Up Founder
- Eisen Sameer, Karamlees Honey, Founder
- Hanaa Alhasan, Youth Economic Empowerment Expert (facilitator), ITC

"Empowering the youth begins with lending an ear to their aspirations and challenges. It's essential to weave their voices into the tapestry of policy change, especially regarding access to finance."

Zahraa Alsarraf, Second Up Founder

Highlights

- The investment landscape in Iraq requires strategies that are specifically designed for the context of Iraqi SMEs. Impact investments are seen as a way to support sustainable growth in Iraq's SME sector.
- Adopting international best practices is crucial for Iraqi SMEs to remain competitive, e.g. by updating operational strategies, adopting new technologies, or sustainable business models.

Recommendations

- Policy reforms within the banking sector should be more responsive to the needs of young entrepreneurs (e.g. special loan programs, reduced collateral requirements, and the creation of credit guarantee schemes).
- Establish a comprehensive policy framework that supports SME development (e.g. fiscal incentives, support for business incubators and accelerators).
- Enhance capacity in areas such as financial literacy, business management, and strategic planning, with tailored advice for different stages of a firm's lifecycle.
- Targeted support is required for agricultural entrepreneurs.

Nurturing Iraq's Growth through Women Inclusion in the Economy

Speakers

- Maryam Allami (facilitator), Economic and development advisor, Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands in Iraq.
- David Cordobes, Senior programme officer youth and sports, ITC
- Mohammed Hameed, Programs Manager at KAPITA Business Hub
- Marwa Al-Nuaimi, Green Gold, Founder
- Batool Alsarraf, Talu Co-Founder

"Empowering women in the economic sector transcends traditional entrepreneurship; we champion not only women entrepreneurs but also 'mompreneurs', recognizing the unique balance they maintain between nurturing families and nurturing businesses."

David Cordobes, Senior programme officer youth and sports, ITC

Highlights

- The impact of showcasing successful women serves as a source of inspiration and empowerment, encouraging more women to enter and thrive in the workforce.
- The adoption of inclusive policies within organizations is not just a matter of fairness but also a strategic advantage.

Recommendations

- Promote and publicize women's achievements to motivate and guide potential female entrants into the workforce.
- Develop and provide training programs tailored to women, with emphasis on skills to improve their professional and entrepreneurial endeavours.
- Expand educational and professional opportunities to women in rural areas through targeted online and hybrid educational programs and proactive outreach initiatives.
- Create more inclusive criteria for women seeking finance, reducing the emphasis on collateral, and considering alternative indicators of creditworthiness.

A promising market: Iraq's Retail Landscape and Prospects

Speakers

- Methaq Mohammed, Sourcing manager, Taawon Hypermarket
- Zaid R. Shweikh, CEO, Meswag Hypermarket
- Mohammed Hameed, Commercial Director, Waffir
- Ali Ismael Rahman, Merchandise Manager, Carrefour
- Zahraa Witwit (facilitator), National Project Manager, ITC

Recommendations and highlights

- Retailers are highly supportive of purchasing local Iraqi products and engaging directly with farmers if the quality aligns with their standards.
- Manufacturers can establish direct connections with retailers through fair agreements between both parties.
- The retail sector generates numerous job opportunities and encourages youth employment in the private sector. Workers should have access to health and social insurance benefits.

