

# JOUN SME'S



## **START YOUR BUSINESS**

*Importance of the Role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the economic development of Joun*

## **ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION**

*SMEs contribute to economic growth by diversifying the local economy. They introduce new products and services, which can attract investment and stimulate other sectors*

## **SUCCESS TIPS**

# SUSTAINABILITY

## **DEVELOP BUSINESS HUBS IN JOUN OR THE CHOUF**

## **JOB CREATION**

*SMEs are significant employers, providing jobs to a large portion of the population. This helps reduce unemployment and poverty levels in the community*

## **INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY**

*By implementing these strategies, SMEs in the Chouf can build a strong, collaborative network that enhances their competitiveness and sustainability.*

Developed by Dr Antoine J. Burkush, PhD

**STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR SME DEVELOPMENT IN JOUN AND OTHER**

**CHOUF TOWNS:**

**The Olive Oil and Carob Sectors**

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Together, we have created a roadmap for Joun's future that honors our heritage and inspires a brighter tomorrow. I am truly grateful to each of you for your contributions, enthusiasm, and dedication to this endeavor.

With sincere appreciation,

Dr Antoine J. Burkush, PhD

## الشكر والتقدير

هذه المجموعة من المقترحات هي نتيجة رؤية مشتركة ورحلة تعاونية ، تسترشد بمدخلات وتفاني ورؤى عدد لا يحصى من الأفراد الذين يحملون جون قريبا من قلوبهم. لم يكن ذلك ممكنا بدون الدعم والمساهمات الثابتة من أعضاء المجتمع والخبراء وأصحاب المصلحة والقادة المحليين ، الذين قدم كل منهم وجهات نظره الفريدة إلى الطاولة.

أولا وقبل كل شيء، أعرب عن خالص امتناني لسكان جون، الذين كانت أصواتهم وأفكارهم وتطلعاتهم أساس هذا العمل. لقد كان استعدادك لمشاركة أفكارك وأحلامك لمدينتنا لا يقدر بثمن في تشكيل المقترحات التي تعكس حقا روح مجتمعنا وأهدافه. كانت مشاركتك في المناقشات والاستطلاعات والتجمعات المجتمعية شهادة على التزامك بمستقبل جون.

شكر خاص للذين كانت مساهماتهم مفيدة في صقل رؤيتنا.

إلى القادة المحليين وأصحاب المصلحة الذين دافعوا عن هذا المشروع ، كان دعمكم مصدرا حيويا للتشجيع. لقد أعطت قيادتكم وفهمكم لتحديات وفرص جون الفريدة عمقا لهذه المقترحات ، مما جعلها راسخة في كل من تاريخ مدينتنا وإمكاناتها للنمو.

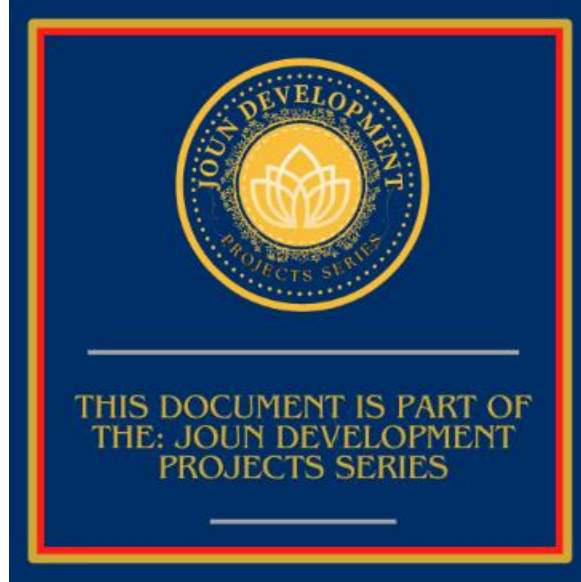
أخيرا ، أود أن أشكر كل من عمل وراء الكواليس - سواء في جمع البيانات أو إجراء البحوث أو تنظيم الاجتماعات - كانت جهودك حاسمة في إحياء هذا العمل.

معا ، أنشأنا خارطة طريق لمستقبل جون تكرم تراثنا وتلهم غدا أكثر إشراقا. أنا ممتن حقا لكل واحد منكم على مساهماتكم وحماسكم وتفانيكم في هذا المسعى.

مع خالص التقدير،

د. انطوان جان البرخش





مشاريع  
مبادرات شخصية  
"من أجل الصالح العام"

## Joun Development Projects

"Pro Bono Publico"

Dr Antoine J. Burkush, PhD

رؤية واحدة، هوية واحدة، مجتمع واحد

## Preface

In a world where rapid change is the new normal, the importance of strategic, sustainable, and community-centered development is paramount. Joun, with its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and resilient community, stands at a crossroads—one that presents both challenges and extraordinary opportunities. As we look toward Joun's future, it is essential that our plans honor the town's heritage, respond to today's needs, and set a course for future generations to thrive.

This series of proposals is the result of a deeply collaborative effort to envision Joun's path forward. Each plan reflects input from residents, local stakeholders, and community leaders, resulting in a shared vision that is both ambitious and respectful of our town's unique identity. These proposals encompass a comprehensive range of initiatives, from infrastructure and economic development to cultural preservation and environmental stewardship, with each component tailored to address Joun's specific strengths, challenges, and aspirations.

Our proposals emphasize a commitment to public infrastructure improvements, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and cultural continuity. From plans to enhance recreational facilities and community services to initiatives for sustainable tourism and green energy, each proposal aims to make Joun a model of progressive yet grounded development. The ultimate goal is to create a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community—one that embodies the values, dreams, and talents of its people.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this vision. Your dedication, ideas, and insight have been invaluable, illuminating the pathway to a future that aligns with Joun's core values while embracing growth and innovation. These proposals are an invitation to all residents of Joun to imagine, participate, and help build a community that harmonizes tradition with the possibilities of tomorrow.

As you review this collection, I encourage you to see not just plans, but a vision for what Joun can become. Let us move forward together, translating these ideas into action, and creating a brighter, thriving, and unified future for Joun.

With deep respect and optimism,

Dr Antoine J. Burkush, PhD

## مقدمة

في عالم حيث التغيير السريع هو الوضع الطبيعي الجديد ، فإن أهمية التنمية الاستراتيجية والمستدامة التي تركز على المجتمع أمر بالغ الأهمية. تقف جون ، بتراتها الثقافي الغني وجمالها الطبيعي ومجتمعها المرن ، على مفترق طرق - مفترق طرق يمثل تحديات وفرصا غير عادية. بينما نتطلع إلى مستقبل جون ، من الضروري أن تكرم خططنا تراث المدينة ، وتستجيب لاحتياجات اليوم ، وتضع مسارا للأجيال القادمة لتزدهر.

هذه السلسلة من المقترحات هي نتيجة جهد تعاوني عميق لتصور مسار جون إلى الأمام. تعكس كل خطة مدخلات من السكان وأصحاب المصلحة المحليين وقادة المجتمع ، مما يؤدي إلى رؤية مشتركة طموحة وتحترم الهوية الفريدة لمدينتنا. تشمل هذه المقترحات مجموعة شاملة من المبادرات ، من البنية التحتية والتنمية الاقتصادية إلى الحفاظ على الثقافة والإشراف البيئي ، مع تصميم كل مكون لمعالجة نقاط القوة والتحديات والتطلعات المحددة لجون.

تؤكد مقترحاتنا على الالتزام بتحسين البنية التحتية العامة ، والتمكين الاقتصادي ، والاستدامة البيئية ، والاستمرارية الثقافية. من خطط تعزيز المرافق الترفيهية والخدمات المجتمعية إلى مبادرات السياحة المستدامة والطاقة الخضراء ، يهدف كل اقتراح إلى جعل جون نموذجا للتنمية التقدمية والمرتكزة. الهدف النهائي هو إنشاء مجتمع نابض بالحياة وشامل ومرن - مجتمع يجسد قيم وأحلام ومواهب شعبه.

وأعرب عن خالص امتناني لكل من ساهم في هذه الرؤية. لقد كان تفانيك وأفكارك ورؤيتك لا تقدر بثمن ، مما يضيء الطريق إلى مستقبل يتماشى مع القيم الأساسية لجون مع احتضان النمو والابتكار. هذه المقترحات هي دعوة لجميع سكان جون للتخيل والمشاركة والمساعدة في بناء مجتمع ينسق التقاليد مع إمكانيات الغد.

أثناء مراجعتك لهذه المجموعة ، أشجعك على رؤية ليس فقط الخطط ، ولكن رؤية لما يمكن أن يصبح عليه جون. دعونا نمضي قدما معا، ونترجم هذه الأفكار إلى أفعال، ونخلق مستقبلا أكثر إشراقا وازدهارا وموحدا لجون.

مع الاحترام العميق والتفاؤل،

د. انطوان جان البرخش

**STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR SME DEVELOPMENT IN JOUN AND OTHER**

**CHOUF TOWNS:**

**The Olive Oil and Carob Sectors**

## Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are considered as the fundamental tool for economic growth, nevertheless, they face continuous financing challenges. SMEs are a major source for generating employment, creation of wealth and alleviating poverty from the rural regions in developing countries. Their access to finance is key to the expansion of this sector.

Developing the SME sector in Joun and other towns in the Chouf District can be a transformative initiative, especially with a focus on olive oil and carob products.

## Importance of the Role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the economic development of Joun

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the economic development of Joun. Here are some key benefits they bring to the local economy:

### 1. Job Creation

SMEs are significant employers, providing jobs to a large portion of the population. This helps reduce unemployment and poverty levels in the community<sup>3</sup>.

### 2. Economic Growth and Diversification

SMEs contribute to economic growth by diversifying the local economy. They introduce new products and services, which can attract investment and stimulate other sectors<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. Innovation and Creativity

SMEs are often more agile and innovative than larger companies. They can quickly adapt to market changes and introduce new ideas, driving technological advancements and creative solutions<sup>3</sup>.

### 4. Support for Local Communities

SMEs strengthen local communities by fostering a sense of community and supporting local networks. They often source materials locally and reinvest profits back into the community<sup>3</sup>.

### 5. Sustainability

Many SMEs adopt sustainable practices, contributing to environmental conservation. They can be more flexible in implementing eco-friendly processes and products<sup>3</sup>.

### 6. Regional Integration and Competitiveness

SMEs enhance regional integration by connecting local markets with national and international markets. This increases the competitiveness of the local economy and opens up new opportunities for growth<sup>3</sup>.

## 7. Resilience to Economic Shocks

A diverse base of SMEs can make the local economy more resilient to economic shocks. They provide stability by spreading economic risk across various sectors<sup>3</sup>.

By supporting SMEs, Joun can harness these benefits to create a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive local economy.

## Challenges

SMEs in Joun, like many others globally, could face several challenges that can hinder their growth and sustainability. Here are some of the key challenges:

### 1. Access to Finance

- Limited Funding: SMEs often struggle to secure funding from traditional banks due to stringent credit requirements and high-interest rates<sup>2</sup>.
- Alternative Financing: While alternative lenders are available, finding the best deals can be challenging<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Talent Acquisition and Retention

- Skilled Workforce: Attracting and retaining skilled workers is a significant challenge, especially when competing with larger companies that offer higher salaries and more benefits<sup>5</sup>.
- Training and Development: SMEs may lack the resources to invest in comprehensive training and development programs<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. Market Competition

- Global Competition: SMEs face stiff competition not only locally but also from international markets, which can impact their market share and profitability<sup>4</sup>.
- Brand Recognition: Building a strong brand presence can be difficult for SMEs with limited marketing budgets<sup>2</sup>.

### 4. Regulatory Environment

- Compliance: Navigating the regulatory landscape can be complex and time-consuming, especially for small businesses with limited administrative resources<sup>5</sup>.
- Policy Support: A non-supportive policy environment can further complicate business operations<sup>5</sup>.

## 5. Digital Transformation

- Technology Adoption: Embracing new technologies, such as AI and digital marketing tools, is essential but can be daunting due to the costs and expertise required<sup>2</sup>.
- E-commerce: Developing and maintaining an effective online presence is crucial for reaching broader markets but can be resource-intensive<sup>2</sup>.

## 6. Sustainability Practices

- Sustainable Operations: Implementing sustainable practices can be challenging due to the initial investment required and the need for ongoing education and training<sup>1</sup>.
- Certifications: Obtaining certifications for organic or sustainable products can be a lengthy and costly process<sup>1</sup>.

## 7. Cultural and Historical Preservation

- Balancing Modernization and Tradition: SMEs in Joun must balance modern business practices with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, which can sometimes be at odds<sup>1</sup>.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including support from local government, access to funding, and community initiatives to foster a supportive business environment.

## Developing Small Enterprises in Joun

Here are some general strategies to consider:

### 1. Attracting Investors

- Highlight Unique Selling Points: Emphasize the unique qualities of Joun's olive oil and carob products, such as organic farming practices or traditional production methods.
- Create Investment Packages: Develop detailed investment packages that outline potential returns, market opportunities, and the socio-economic impact of investing in local SMEs.

### 2. Encouraging Sustainable Practices

- Training and Education: Provide training for local farmers and producers on sustainable farming techniques and the benefits of organic certification.
- Incentives for Sustainability: Offer incentives such as tax breaks or grants for SMEs that adopt sustainable practices.

### 3. Cooperative Marketing System

- Form Cooperatives: Encourage local producers to form cooperatives to pool resources, share knowledge, and increase bargaining power.

- Joint Marketing Campaigns: Develop joint marketing campaigns to promote Joun's products both locally and internationally, leveraging the cooperative's collective brand.

#### **4. Establishing a Museum**

- Cultural Heritage: Use the museum to showcase Joun's rich history and cultural heritage, including the traditional methods of olive oil and carob production.
- Tourism Integration: Integrate the museum into local tourism initiatives to attract visitors and create additional revenue streams for the community.

#### **5. Promoting Historical and Cultural Heritage**

- Storytelling: Use storytelling to highlight the historical significance of Joun and its products. This can be done through various media, including social media, documentaries, and local events.
- Cultural Events: Organize cultural events and festivals that celebrate Joun's heritage, attracting tourists and fostering community pride.

#### **6. Leveraging Technology**

- E-commerce Platforms: Develop e-commerce platforms to sell Joun's products online, reaching a broader market.
- Digital Marketing: Utilize digital marketing strategies to promote Joun's products and heritage, including social media campaigns and influencer partnerships.

By focusing on these areas, we can create a robust and sustainable SME sector in Joun that not only boosts the local economy but also preserves and promotes its unique cultural heritage.

### **Steps for Developing Small Enterprises in Joun**

Developing small enterprises in Joun can significantly boost the local economy and enhance community well-being. Here are some steps and strategies to consider:

#### **1. Identify Key Sectors**

Focus on sectors with high potential for growth in Joun, such as tourism, agriculture, crafts, and local services. Highlighting the town's history, natural beauty, and cultural heritage can attract tourists and investors.

#### **2. Provide Training and Support**

Offer training programs for aspiring entrepreneurs on business management, marketing, and digital skills. Partner with local universities or business development centers to provide these resources.



### **3. Access to Finance**

Facilitate access to microloans and grants for small businesses. Collaborate with local banks, government programs, and international organizations to create funding opportunities.

### **4. Create a Business Network**

Establish a local business network or chamber of commerce to foster collaboration and support among small enterprises. This network can provide mentorship, share resources, and advocate for the interests of small businesses.

### **5. Leverage Technology**

Encourage the adoption of e-commerce and digital marketing to reach a broader audience. Providing workshops on how to set up online stores and use social media effectively can be beneficial.

### **6. Promote Local Products**

Organize events and markets to showcase local products and services. This can help build a strong brand for Joun and attract visitors from nearby areas.

### **7. Supportive Policies**

Work with local government to create policies that support small businesses, such as tax incentives, simplified regulations, and infrastructure improvements.

### **8. Community Involvement**

Engage the community in supporting local businesses through buy-local campaigns and community events. This can create a sense of pride and ownership among residents.

### **9. Sustainable Practices**

Encourage small enterprises to adopt sustainable practices, which can attract environmentally conscious consumers and reduce costs in the long run.

### **10. Monitor and Evaluate**

Regularly assess the progress of small enterprises and the effectiveness of support programs. Use feedback to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

By implementing these strategies, Joun can create a vibrant ecosystem for small enterprises, fostering economic growth and community development.

### **Promoting collaboration among SMEs**

Promoting collaboration among SMEs in the Chouf can lead to shared resources, increased innovation, and stronger market presence. Here are some strategies to foster collaboration:

### **1. Establishing a Local Business Network**

- Regular Meetings: Organize regular meetings or networking events where SME owners can share experiences, challenges, and opportunities.
- Online Platforms: Create an online platform or forum for SMEs to communicate, share resources, and collaborate on projects.

### **2. Creating Cooperative Structures**

- Form Cooperatives: Encourage SMEs to form cooperatives to pool resources, share knowledge, and increase their bargaining power.
- Joint Ventures: Promote joint ventures for larger projects that individual SMEs might not be able to handle alone.

### **3. Shared Resources and Facilities**

- Resource Sharing: Facilitate the sharing of resources such as equipment, office space, and distribution channels.
- Innovation Hubs: Establish innovation hubs or co-working spaces where SMEs can work together, share ideas, and develop new products.

### **4. Collaborative Marketing and Branding**

- Joint Marketing Campaigns: Develop joint marketing campaigns to promote Joun's products both locally and internationally.
- Collective Branding: Create a collective brand for Joun's SMEs to enhance recognition and market presence.

### **5. Training and Development Programs**

- Workshops and Seminars: Organize workshops and seminars on topics such as digital marketing, sustainable practices, and business management.
- Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs where experienced business owners can guide and support newer SMEs.

### **6. Government and Institutional Support**

- Policy Advocacy: Advocate for policies that support SME collaboration, such as tax incentives for cooperative projects.
- Funding and Grants: Seek funding and grants from government and international organizations to support collaborative initiatives.

### **7. Community Engagement**

- Local Events: Host local events and festivals that bring together SMEs and the community, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration.

- Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage partnerships between SMEs and local government or non-profits to work on community projects.

By implementing these strategies, SMEs in the Chouf can build a strong, collaborative network that enhances their competitiveness and sustainability.

## **Developing business hubs in the Chouf**

Developing business hubs in Joun or the Chouf can significantly boost the local SME sector by providing shared resources, fostering collaboration, and creating a supportive environment for growth.

Here's a comprehensive plan to develop business hubs in Joun or the Chouf:

### **1. Needs Assessment**

- Survey SMEs: Conduct a survey to understand the specific needs and challenges of local SMEs. Identify common requirements such as office space, equipment, training, and networking opportunities.
- Community Input: Engage with community members to gather their input and support for the business hubs.

### **2. Location Selection**

- Strategic Locations: Choose locations that are easily accessible to most SMEs and have the potential for future expansion. Consider proximity to transportation, markets, and other essential services.
- Existing Infrastructure: Utilize existing buildings or spaces that can be renovated and repurposed for business hubs to reduce initial costs.

### **3. Facility Design and Setup**

- Shared Spaces: Design the hubs to include shared office spaces, meeting rooms, co-working areas, and event spaces.
- Essential Amenities: Ensure the hubs are equipped with high-speed internet, office equipment (printers, copiers), and basic amenities (kitchen, restrooms).
- Innovation Labs: Include innovation labs or maker spaces with tools and equipment for product development and prototyping.

### **4. Funding and Partnerships**

- Government Grants: Apply for government grants and subsidies to fund the development of the business hubs.
- Private Investment: Seek investment from private companies and investors who are interested in supporting local economic development.

- Public-Private Partnerships: Form partnerships with local businesses, educational institutions, and non-profits to share resources and expertise.

## **5. Management and Operations**

- Hub Management Team: Establish a dedicated management team to oversee the operations of the business hubs. This team should include professionals with experience in business development, community engagement, and facility management.

- Membership Models: Develop membership models for SMEs to access the hubs, including options for daily, monthly, or annual memberships.

## **6. Programs and Services**

- Training and Workshops: Offer regular training sessions and workshops on topics such as digital marketing, financial management, and sustainable practices.

- Mentorship Programs: Create mentorship programs where experienced entrepreneurs and industry experts can provide guidance and support to SMEs.

- Networking Events: Host networking events, pitch nights, and business expos to facilitate connections and collaborations among SMEs.

## **7. Marketing and Outreach**

- Community Engagement: Promote the business hubs through community events, local media, and social media campaigns to raise awareness and attract members.

- Success Stories: Highlight success stories of SMEs that have benefited from the hubs to inspire others and demonstrate the value of the initiative.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Performance Metrics: Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of the business hubs, such as the number of SMEs served, job creation, and revenue growth.

- Feedback Mechanisms: Implement feedback mechanisms to continuously gather input from hub members and make improvements based on their needs.

By following this plan, Joun can create vibrant business hubs that support the growth and development of local SMEs, fostering a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## **Nine Key Strategies**

Developing the SME sector in Joun involves several key strategies to ensure growth, sustainability, and community engagement. Here are nine comprehensive steps to consider:

### **1. Access to Finance**

- Microfinance and Grants: Establish microfinance institutions and seek grants from international organizations to provide SMEs with the necessary capital.
- Crowdfunding: Utilize crowdfunding platforms to raise funds for specific projects, engaging the community and potential customers.

### **2. Capacity Building**

- Training Programs: Offer training programs in business management, digital marketing, and sustainable practices to enhance the skills of SME owners and employees.
- Mentorship: Create mentorship networks where experienced entrepreneurs can guide new business owners.

### **3. Market Access**

- Local and International Markets: Develop strategies to access both local and international markets, including participation in trade fairs and online marketplaces.
- Export Support: Provide support for SMEs to meet export standards and navigate international trade regulations.

### **4. Sustainable Practices**

- Eco-Friendly Production: Encourage the adoption of eco-friendly production methods, such as organic farming and waste reduction techniques.
- Certifications: Assist SMEs in obtaining certifications like Fair Trade, Organic, and ISO to enhance their marketability.

### **5. Collaboration and Networking**

- Business Associations: Form business associations or cooperatives to facilitate resource sharing, joint marketing efforts, and collective bargaining.
- Networking Events: Organize regular networking events to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange among SMEs.

### **6. Technology Integration**

- Digital Tools: Promote the use of digital tools for inventory management, customer relationship management (CRM), and online sales.
- E-commerce Platforms: Develop e-commerce platforms to enable SMEs to reach a broader audience and streamline their sales processes.

### **7. Government and Institutional Support**

- Policy Advocacy: Advocate for policies that support SME growth, such as tax incentives, simplified regulations, and infrastructure development.

- Public-Private Partnerships: Foster partnerships between SMEs, government agencies, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise.

### **8. Community Engagement**

- Cultural Events: Host cultural events and festivals that celebrate Joun's heritage and products, attracting tourists and fostering community pride.
- Educational Programs: Involve local schools and universities in promoting entrepreneurship and SME development through projects and internships.

### **9. Marketing and Branding**

- Storytelling: Use storytelling to highlight the unique aspects of Joun's products, such as traditional production methods and cultural heritage.
- Social Media Campaigns: Leverage social media to create awareness and engage with potential customers both locally and globally.

By implementing these strategies, Joun can create a vibrant and sustainable SME sector that not only boosts the local economy but also preserves and promotes its unique cultural heritage.

## **Role of Local Government**

Local government can play a crucial role in supporting SME development in Joun by creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive. Here are some key ways the local government can contribute:

### **1. Policy and Regulation**

- Simplified Regulations: Streamline business registration and licensing processes to make it easier for SMEs to start and operate.
- Tax Incentives: Offer tax breaks or incentives for SMEs, especially those that adopt sustainable practices or contribute to local employment.

### **2. Financial Support**

- Grants and Subsidies: Provide grants and subsidies to help SMEs with initial capital, expansion, or adoption of new technologies.
- Access to Credit: Facilitate access to affordable credit through partnerships with local banks and microfinance institutions.

### **3. Infrastructure Development**

- Business Hubs: Develop business hubs or industrial parks with shared facilities and resources that SMEs can use.

- Digital Infrastructure: Invest in digital infrastructure to ensure reliable internet access, which is crucial for e-commerce and digital marketing.

#### **4. Training and Capacity Building**

- Workshops and Seminars: Organize workshops and seminars on business management, marketing, and technology adoption.
- Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs where experienced business owners and professionals can guide new entrepreneurs.

#### **5. Market Access and Promotion**

- Trade Fairs and Exhibitions: Host trade fairs and exhibitions to showcase local products and connect SMEs with potential buyers and investors.
- Export Assistance: Provide support for SMEs to enter international markets, including help with certifications, logistics, and market research.

#### **6. Collaboration with Educational Institutions**

- Research and Development: Partner with universities and research institutions to promote innovation and R&D in local industries.
- Internship Programs: Facilitate internship programs where students can gain practical experience while contributing to local businesses.

#### **7. Community Engagement**

- Local Events: Support local events and festivals that promote Joun's products and cultural heritage, attracting tourists and fostering community pride.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage public-private partnerships to leverage resources and expertise for community development projects.

#### **8. Sustainability Initiatives**

- Green Practices: Promote and support the adoption of sustainable and eco-friendly practices among SMEs.
- Certification Support: Assist SMEs in obtaining certifications for organic, fair trade, or other sustainable practices.

By taking these steps, the local government can create a supportive ecosystem that enables SMEs in Joun to grow, innovate, and contribute to the local economy.

### **Involving local communities in supporting SME development**

Involving local communities in supporting SME development can create a strong, interconnected ecosystem that benefits everyone. Here are some strategies to engage the community:

### **1. Community Awareness and Education**

- Information Campaigns: Launch campaigns to educate the community about the importance of supporting local SMEs. Use social media, local newspapers, and community meetings to spread the word.
- Workshops and Seminars: Organize workshops and seminars to inform community members about how they can support local businesses, such as through purchasing locally-made products or participating in local events.

### **2. Local Events and Festivals**

- Market Days: Host regular market days where local SMEs can showcase and sell their products. This can create a festive atmosphere and encourage community members to buy local.
- Cultural Festivals: Integrate SME products into cultural festivals and events, highlighting the connection between local businesses and the community's heritage.

### **3. Community-Based Projects**

- Collaborative Projects: Initiate projects that involve both SMEs and community members, such as community gardens, local art installations, or clean-up drives. These projects can foster a sense of ownership and pride in local businesses.
- Volunteer Programs: Create volunteer programs where community members can offer their skills and time to support local SMEs, such as helping with marketing, events, or administrative tasks.

### **4. Local Support Networks**

- Buy Local Campaigns: Encourage community members to support local businesses through "Buy Local" campaigns. Highlight the benefits of keeping money within the community.
- Loyalty Programs: Develop loyalty programs that reward community members for frequenting local SMEs. This can include discounts, special offers, or community recognition.

### **5. Youth Engagement**

- School Programs: Partner with local schools to create programs that teach students about entrepreneurship and the importance of supporting local businesses. This can include field trips to local SMEs, guest lectures, and student projects.
- Youth Entrepreneurship: Encourage youth entrepreneurship by supporting young people in starting their own small businesses. Provide mentorship, resources, and platforms for them to showcase their products.



## 6. Public-Private Partnerships

- Collaborative Initiatives: Foster partnerships between local government, businesses, and community organizations to support SME development. This can include joint funding initiatives, shared resources, and collaborative events.
- Community Grants: Establish community grant programs that provide funding for projects that benefit both SMEs and the community.

## 7. Feedback and Engagement

- Community Forums: Hold regular community forums where SME owners and community members can discuss challenges, share ideas, and collaborate on solutions.
- Surveys and Feedback: Conduct surveys to gather feedback from the community on how local SMEs can better serve their needs and how they can support these businesses.

By implementing these strategies, we can create a supportive environment where local SMEs and the community thrive together.

## Successful Examples from other Regions and Neighboring Countries

There are several successful examples from neighboring regions that can provide valuable insights for developing business hubs in the Chouf Region or in Joun:

### 1. Beirut Digital District (BDD), Lebanon

- Overview: BDD is a vibrant community that brings together creative minds and entrepreneurs in the heart of Beirut. It offers state-of-the-art office spaces, co-working areas, and event spaces.
- Key Features: BDD provides a collaborative environment with access to high-speed internet, modern facilities, and a range of services including mentorship programs, networking events, and training workshops.
- Success Factors: The success of BDD lies in its ability to foster a sense of community among its members, provide essential resources, and create opportunities for collaboration and innovation<sup>1</sup>.

### 2. King Hussein Business Park (KHBP), Jordan

- Overview: KHBP in Amman is a leading business hub that supports startups and SMEs by offering office spaces, business services, and networking opportunities.
- Key Features: The park includes incubators, accelerators, and innovation labs, along with access to funding and investment opportunities.

- Success Factors: KHBP's success is attributed to its comprehensive support system for businesses, strategic location, and strong partnerships with educational institutions and international organizations<sup>2</sup>.

### **3. Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), UAE**

- Overview: DSO is a technology park that provides an integrated living and working community for tech-focused businesses.

- Key Features: DSO offers advanced infrastructure, business services, and a range of facilities including residential areas, schools, and healthcare centers.

- Success Factors: The park's focus on technology and innovation, coupled with its supportive regulatory environment and access to global markets, has made it a hub for tech startups and SMEs<sup>3</sup>.

### **4. Smart Village, Egypt**

- Overview: Located near Cairo, Smart Village is a business park that hosts a variety of companies, from startups to multinational corporations.

- Key Features: The village offers modern office spaces, conference facilities, and a range of business services. It also includes educational institutions and research centers.

- Success Factors: Smart Village's success is driven by its strategic location, high-quality infrastructure, and strong emphasis on fostering innovation and collaboration among its tenants<sup>4</sup>.

### **5. Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), Qatar**

- Overview: QSTP is a hub for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, supporting startups and SMEs in various sectors.

- Key Features: The park provides access to funding, mentorship, and state-of-the-art facilities, along with opportunities for collaboration with leading research institutions.

- Success Factors: QSTP's focus on research and development, coupled with its strong support network and access to global markets, has made it a key player in fostering innovation in Qatar.

By studying these successful initiatives, Joun can adopt best practices such as creating a collaborative environment, providing essential resources, and fostering strong partnerships with educational institutions and international organizations.

## Solutions to the Challenges

### 1. Inadequate Infrastructure

Challenge: Poor infrastructure, such as unreliable electricity, internet connectivity, and transportation, can hinder the operations of business hubs<sup>1</sup>.

Solution: Invest in robust infrastructure from the outset. Ensure reliable power supply, high-speed internet, and easy access to transportation. Partner with local utilities and tech companies to enhance infrastructure.

### 2. Lack of Community Engagement

Challenge: Without community buy-in, business hubs may struggle to attract and retain members.

Solution: Engage the community early in the planning process. Hold public consultations, involve local stakeholders, and ensure the hub addresses the community's needs and aspirations.

### 3. Insufficient Funding

Challenge: Securing adequate funding for initial setup and ongoing operations can be difficult.

Solution: Diversify funding sources by seeking grants, private investments, and public-private partnerships. Develop a sustainable business model that includes membership fees, event hosting, and service offerings.

### 4. Knowledge Exchange Barriers

Challenge: Effective knowledge exchange is crucial, but competitive concerns can hinder collaboration<sup>2</sup>.

Solution: Foster a culture of trust and collaboration. Implement policies that protect intellectual property while encouraging open communication and knowledge sharing.

### 5. Talent Acquisition and Retention

Challenge: Attracting and retaining skilled talent can be challenging, especially in smaller towns.

Solution: Create an attractive work environment with opportunities for professional development, networking, and career growth. Partner with educational institutions to create a talent pipeline.

### 6. Regulatory and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Challenge: Navigating complex regulations and bureaucratic processes can delay or derail projects.

Solution: Work closely with local government to streamline regulatory processes. Advocate for policies that support SME development and innovation.

### **7. Sustainability and Scalability**

Challenge: Ensuring the long-term sustainability and scalability of the hubs can be difficult.

Solution: Develop a clear business plan with scalable revenue streams. Regularly assess and adapt the hub's offerings to meet evolving market needs and opportunities.

### **8. Market Access and Competition**

Challenge: SMEs may struggle to compete with larger companies and access broader markets.

Solution: Provide support for market research, export readiness, and digital marketing. Facilitate connections with larger companies and international markets through trade missions and networking events.

### **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Challenge: Without proper monitoring and evaluation, it's hard to measure success and make necessary adjustments.

Solution: Establish clear metrics for success and regularly collect data on hub performance. Use feedback from members to continuously improve services and facilities.

By anticipating these challenges and implementing strategies to address them, you can create a successful and sustainable business

## Actions for Strategic Goals

Useful Information. Source: ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for the SME Development 2016-2025

### Strategic Goal: Promote Productivity, Technology and Innovation

Improvements to productivity and technology are considered to be the key drivers to integrate with the production networks of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the region. In addition, MSMEs are considered to perform better when they are allied with other MSMEs or with large enterprises including MNCs. From this perspective, industry clusters would help MSMEs enhance productivity and foster innovation.

Desired outcomes		Actions	
A-1)	Productivity will be enhanced	A-1-1)	Develop enhanced understanding of relevant productivity measures
		A-1-2)	Promote capital investment
		A-1-3)	Improve production management skills
A-2)	Industry clusters will be enhanced	A-2-1)	Enhance industrial linkages among SMEs and between SMEs and large enterprises including MNCs
		A-2-2)	Promote technology and build capabilities to foster industry clustering
A-3)	Innovation will be promoted as a key competitive advantage	A-3-1)	Promote key technology usage and its application to business for innovation
		A-3-2)	Enhance information on innovation support services
		A-3-3)	Enhance business-academia collaboration

## **1- Productivity Will Be enhanced**

### **1) Develop enhanced understanding of relevant productivity measures**

1. Study on productivity enhancement and organizing public-private dialogues and sectoral roundtables:

- Conducting studies on productivity, technology, key trends, and policy options in ASEAN with focus on four countries with the cooperation of multilateral organizations
- Organizing public-private dialogues on 'productivity' and 'quality standard' with the cooperation of public, private, and academic sectors
- Conducting sectoral roundtables with businesses to improve the use of technology and identify drivers of innovation

2) Promote capital investment

1. Identification and promotion of best practices in respect of funding programs on capital investment and facility leasing

3) Improve production management skills

1. Sharing best practices/standards of basic 'productivity' and 'quality' for micro enterprises (Strengthening micro enterprises)

Enhance industrial linkage among SMEs and between SMEs and large enterprises including MNCs

1. Sharing of regional and global best practices of industrial cluster development.

2. Developing concepts of special industrial parks/zones to foster focus industries where both SMEs and MNCs can build partnerships

## **2- Industry clusters will be enhanced**

1) Promote technology and build capabilities to foster industry clustering

1. Creation of incentive programs or awards for MNCs/large enterprises to train local SMEs (suppliers, dealers, etc.) to enable technology transfer to local SMEs (national-level implementation)

2. Sharing best practices on appropriate technology adoption among SMEs to support higher production capability in focused industries

## **3) Innovation will be promoted as a key competitive Advantage**

1) Promote key technology usage and its application to business for innovation

1. Enhancement of incentives for innovation awards and knowledge-based creative and green industries (national-level implementation)

2. Creation of knowledge platform and incentives for fostering manufacturing and knowledge- based industries by leveraging on the ABINet platform:
    - Providing knowledge on production technology for manufacturers
    - Providing knowledge on different levels of innovation (e.g. product innovation, process innovation, etc.)
    - Encouraging research collaboration for knowledge-based creative industries
    - Promoting adoption of green initiatives and technology processes to business and manufacturing (including tax incentive)
  3. Developing capacity building programmes on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) awareness and commercialization for SMEs (national-level implementation)
  4. Promotion of post Geographical Indications (GI) programmes for SME GI associations to promote commercialization (national-level implementation)
  5. Strengthening existing Technology Transfer Centers with the aim of being able to commercialize new products
- 2) Enhance information on innovation support services
1. Development of an on-line interactive platform for ASEAN business incubation network (ABINet) for exchange of ideas and information
  2. Promotion of collaboration between creative industry agencies and SMEs/entrepreneurs to advance the skills of knowledge-based creative industries supported by the use of IT-based capacity
- 3) Enhance business-academia collaboration
1. Setting up a network Programme for the promotion of joint collaboration among SMEs, large enterprises and academia
  2. Establishment of programs for universities to share their facilities with SMEs

## **Strategic Goal Increase Access to Finance**

Access to financing from traditional financial institutions is limited due to the lack of credit information. There is a strong need to enhance MSMEs' financial literacy to make them more aware of financial resources and support programmes available to them. MSMEs need to be encouraged to utilize diversified sources of financing.

Desired outcomes		Actions	
B-1)	Institutional framework for access to finance will be developed and enhanced	B-1-1)	Improve understanding and strengthen traditional financing infrastructure
		B-1-2)	Improve policy environment and measures to foster alternative and non-traditional financing through increasing availability of diversified sources of private financing
		B-1-3)	Strengthen export financing facilities
B-2)	Financial inclusion and literacy will be promoted, and the ability of MSMEs to engage in the financial system will be enhanced	B-2-1)	Enhance outreach to promote financial inclusion to increase access to both traditional and alternative financing

### 1) Institutional framework for access to finance will be developed and enhanced

- Developing an information system for regional credit rating (follow up project of “Developing an ASEAN Benchmark for SME Credit Rating Methodology”)
- Developing policy options to enhance traditional financing such as credit guarantee scheme
- Capacity building for SMEs, regulatory agencies, and financial institutions in both public and private sectors on credit screening of SMEs (credit assessment, intercompany credit, etc.), and establishment of institutional systems to implement preferential loans with credit guarantees (national-level implementation)

### 2) Improve policy environment and measures to foster alternative and non-traditional financing through increasing availability of diversified sources of private financing

### 3) Strengthen export financing facilities



- Promotion of trade finance such as trade credit, export-oriented loan insurance, and factoring by leading financial institutions (national-level implementation)
- Sharing best practices to facilitate the adoption of accounting rules, guidelines, and schemes for MSMEs
- Developing micro financing programmes for micro enterprises (Strengthening micro enterprises) (national-level implementation)
- Creation of interactive on-line platform on a range of financial support available to MSMEs to minimize information gap (ASEAN SME Service Centre)

## Strategic Goal Enhance Market Access and Internationalization

ASEAN enterprises have limited information on how to access markets, and are not well aware of the issues related to international requirements. Lack of technical knowledge prevents these enterprises from participating in the global value chains, and thus SMEs' contribution to exports remains small. Providing information platforms and capacity building programs can therefore play an important role in enhancing their market access, both from the regional and international perspectives.

Desired outcomes		Actions	
C-1)	Support schemes for market access and integration into the global supply chain will be further developed	C-1-1)	Increase information on regional and global market access and opportunities
		C-1-2)	Promote partnership with MNCs/large enterprises to increase market access and opportunities
		C-1-3)	Enhance the use of e-commerce
		C-1-4)	Promote adoption of international standards of quality to facilitate market access
C-2)	Export capacity will be promoted	C-2-1)	Establish mechanisms to assist in increasing exports

### 1) Increase information on regional and global market access and opportunities

- Promoting and increasing outreach on benefits of AEC to SMEs
- Support schemes for market access and integration into the global supply chain will be further developed

- Enhancement of information on markets, FTAs, and potential partners (ASEAN SME Service Centre)
- Promote partnership with MNCs / large enterprises to increase market access and opportunities
- Facilitation of networking and partnership between SMEs and large enterprises/MNCs
- Strategic networking among SMEs, MNCs to enhance participation into the global supply chain through on-line platform and business matching
- Development of mentor and mentee programmes between MNCs/large enterprises/SMEs

## **2. Support for business matching and partnerships**

- Organizing trade fairs/events to support business matching and partnerships between MNCs and local SMEs
- Organizing networking and business matching events for SME CEOs and regional business leaders in the focused industries

## **3. Establishment and promotion of ‘Digital Service Hub’ that will enhance trade supply chain and also improve the competitiveness of ASEAN SMEs in a low-cost manner**

- Enhance the use of e-commerce
- Promoting the development and utilization of e-commerce platforms to encourage expansion of SMEs
- Promote adoption of international standard of quality to facilitate market access
- Sharing model strategies for SMEs to be integrated into the global supply chain including focused industries and opportunities for SMEs in the value chain
- Capacity building for SMEs on international standards in cooperation with ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and

## **Strategic Goal Enhance Policy and Regulatory Environment**

Inter- and intra-governmental cooperation and orchestration of MSMEs development is important for the regional integration. MSMEs policies and regulations that are aligned and applied in AMS would promote synergies at the regional level. MSMEs are not effectively involved in the institutional framework’s decision-making process. Collaborative actions should be encouraged. From an administrative perspective, less costly and faster registration processes would facilitate and increase start-ups.

Desired outcomes		Actions	
D-1)	Inter and intra-governmental cooperation in terms of policy and regulation will be enhanced	D-1-1)	Strengthen the coordination mechanism between public agencies responsible for MSMEs
		D-1-2)	Develop strategies to align national MSMEs development strategies with the regional strategies
D-2)	MSMEs' interests will be promoted and involvement in the decision-making processes will be enhanced	D-2-1)	Advocate and promote MSMEs participation in policy formulation
D-3)	Obtaining of permits and business registration will be streamlined	D-3-1)	Establish a sound system and streamline permit and registration to enable less costly and faster business formation

### 1) Inter and intra- governmental cooperation in terms of policy and regulation will be enhanced

1. Establishment of high level coordination mechanism between agencies with responsibilities for MSMEs
  - Establishment of designated executing MSMEs agency with an effective and empowered coordination and monitoring role
  - Conducting policy workshop on orchestrated MSME assistance programmes on a regional basis
2. Development of comparable MSME statistics through annual business surveys for KPI monitoring
3. Capacity building of policy-makers for effective and mutual intra- and inter-governmental cooperation and coordination in terms of policy and regulation and good governance issues (national-level implementation)

## 2) Develop strategies to align national MSME development strategies with the regional strategies

- Developing MSME policy and implementation guidelines for intra-and inter-governmental cooperation and coordination in policy and regulation:
- Publication of an updated ASEAN SME Policy Index and country reports.

## Strategic Goal Promote Entrepreneurship and Human Capital Development

In a changing environment where global competition is becoming more intense, human capital development is one of the driving forces for MSMEs to succeed. This is especially in respect of business skills and entrepreneurship which are determining factors for women and youth to enter into the labor market.

Desired outcomes		Actions	
E-1)	Entrepreneurial education and learning programmes will be instituted	E-1-1)	Promote entrepreneurship education
E-2)	Human capital development for MSMEs will be enhanced especially for women and youth	E-2-1)	Enhance management and/or technical skills of women and youth entering into the workforce
		E-2-2)	Provide a platform to promote and facilitate women's participation in MSMEs

### Entrepreneurial education and learning programmes to be will be instituted

#### 1) Promote entrepreneurial education

- Establishment of ASEAN-wide internship scheme/post-study programmes in business/entrepreneurship
- Capacity building of teachers for entrepreneurial learning programmes
- Provision of incentives to private service providers for entrepreneurship education

- Accreditation of entrepreneurial learning programmes in educational programmes

## **2) Human capital development for MSMEs will be enhanced especially for women and youth**

1. Development of common curriculums specifically designed for advanced industries in collaboration of international institutions (through e-learning via the ASEAN On-line SME Academy)
2. Establishment of vocational training and counseling centers for micro enterprises, women and youth in collaboration with the private sector (Strengthening micro enterprises)
  - Development of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in the focus industries to meet industry needs in collaboration with sector
  - Establishment of SME technical training centres for updating operational efficiency through on-the-job training (OJT)

Promotion and convening of the ASEAN women entrepreneurs

- Annual public-private dialogue on the promotion of women in the workforce
- Award for outstanding MSMEs, particularly those successful in penetrating international markets in conjunction with the annual ASEAN awards

## **2) Provide a platform to promote and facilitate women's participation in MSMEs**

Promotion of women entrepreneurs through capacity building, market access, branding and packaging:

- Empowering women to move up the value chain
- Capacity building, market access, branding, and packaging
- Support for the creation of the ASEAN brand including training in marketing and branding

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## Actions for Strategic Goals

Useful Information. Source: ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for the SME Development 2016-2025

**END OF THE DOCUMENT**