



LEBANON:

LibanPack: Packaging and labelling services to enhance market access of Lebanese industries

Context

Packaging and labelling are essential pillars of successful marketing. Attractive or innovative design plays a crucial role in stimulating consumer decisions. It communicates a brand's identity and can add value to a product when matching consumer preferences in terms of sustainability or convenience, for instance. At the same time, labels support advertising claims and enhance name recognition.

Packaging and labelling also help ensure food safety, consumer protection and facilitate product traceability. For such functions to be effective, products are subject to strict international standards and regulations, often creating a barrier for exporters from developing countries. While Lebanon's agro-processing sector has the capacity to generate competitive products, non-compliances with packaging and labelling requirements of importing markets limit export opportunities.

Main approach

In view of this challenge, UNIDO – within the framework of the MACLE project (Market Access and Compliance for Lebanese Exports) and in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) and the Syndicate of Packaging – established LibanPack, the Lebanese Packaging Centre. The Centre is a non-profit private association representing a wide range of industrial packaging stakeholders and acts as a national focal point for all economic operators concerned with packaging; it comprises producers, manufacturers, packaging specialists, providers of training and educational programmes, as well as students.

LibanPack offers a wide range of services aimed at improving the quality of packaging and labelling in order to ensure conformity with international standards and increase the competitiveness of Lebanese exports. Services include: assistance for packaging and labelling design; structural design; technical label review; guidance on food safety/packaging management systems, processes and regulatory requirements; and the provision of training, study tours and technical assistance for compliance with international standards and regulations.

In addition to working with regional packaging centres and testing laboratories, the Centre works with a variety of other service providers, such as local testing laboratories at the Lebanese American University (LAU) and the Industrial Research Institute (IRI), which offer calibration and certification services among others.

Impact and results

LibanPack has been a success story for the country. By improving packaging and labelling, it increased the competitiveness of Lebanese products on global markets. In addition, one of the most prominent events hosted by LibanPack is the Lebanon Student StarPack – an annual competition to promote innovation in the packaging domain – the first contest of its kind in the country and the region. Awards are given to the best packaging designs, opening doors to future employment opportunities for young aspiring designers.

The Centre is now a self-sustaining institution, with over 90 members. It has also gained international recognition as a member of the World Packaging Organization (WPO) and an accredited Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) centre.

At a glance

Project title: Increased access to export markets for Lebanese products and improvement of its quality infrastructure to increase TBT/SPS compliance
Donor: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) – Switzerland
Budget: USD 2,555,950
Country coverage: Lebanon
Thematic areas: Conformity assessment, quality, standardization
Other technical area: Market access