



## *About*

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TECHLEB|06 aims to define the roadmap of development strategies and initiatives essential to making Lebanon a vibrant and sustainable technology hub in the Middle East & North Africa region (MENA). The conference will convene key players from the Lebanese private sector, government, and diaspora to connect the building blocks of Lebanon's technology sector: technical and legal infrastructure, capacity development, economic opportunity, global market access, and tax climate. The strategic importance of a thriving technology sector in Lebanon lies in its ripple effect on other sectors and services from both an economic and social standpoint.

While the local industry seems potentially capable of playing its part in making Lebanon an export-driven technology hub, the Lebanese government needs to create an environment suitable for national expertise and innovation to flourish. Support must be given to the ever-expanding diaspora to facilitate its effective contribution to the production of new technology ventures and to Lebanon's transition towards a knowledge-based economy. The Indian, Irish, and Israeli diasporas, among others, have been instrumental in their homelands' external networking and technology export success. However, this could not have happened without their governments assuming the role of an industry promoter and providing the necessary infrastructural, legislative, financial, and educational incentives. To this end, the conference intends to attract, accommodate, and address the three pillars to any success for Lebanon as a regional technology hub: the private sector, the government, and the diaspora.

## *Target Audience, Participants, & Roles*

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Major players and stakeholders expected to be present or addressed in/by the conference to best meet its objectives are the:

- **Private Sector** (*Lebanese established companies, SMEs, startups, technology export success stories, Lebanese leaders in offshore outsourcing, key players in upcoming high-tech industries, etc... would share with conferees their industry needs, capabilities, and aspirations*)
- **Government** (*ICT Parliamentary Committee, OMSAR/TCU, MOPT, MOF, MOET, Central Bank, IDAL, CDR, BETZ, ECOMLEB, among others... would share with conferees ongoing/projected initiatives, expectations from expatriates, measures undertaken to implement relevant pledges in 2005 Council of Ministers Policy Statement, and commitments to the conference outcomes*)

- **Diaspora** (*corporate executives, entrepreneurs, VCs, engineers, IP experts, researchers, marketers, students, among others in the realm of technology, in their capacity as Lebanon's human capital with expertise, not just raw talent... would share with conferees what they can offer, relevant experiences outside, and visions for Lebanon*)
- **International Organizations and Donors** (*USAID, UNDP, ESCWA, EUROMED, World Bank, IMF, SRI/CSTED, among others, playing an ongoing role in rejuvenating Lebanon through funding, national data collection and analysis, and development initiatives... would share with conferees ongoing development programs, statistics, and expectations for Lebanon*)
- **Non-Governmental Organizations and Non-Profits** (*PCA, ALSI, LBN, ITIA-Lebanon, INLET, LCPS, ADIL, BERYTECH, among others... would share with conferees individual missions and activities, difficulties faced, and willingness to make conference outcomes part of their own missions in/for Lebanon*)
- **Academia** (*secondary schooling, vocational training, university education, and graduate research in Lebanese academic institutions... would share with conferees current trends and future directions in curricula, new graduate programs, and research areas and resources as related to the conference objectives*)

Additional players who would bring added-value to the conference are the:

- **Media** (*Lebanese television, radio, press, and the web, all of which have an essential role to play in assisting the public and private sectors to raise technological awareness in Lebanon and in providing TECHLEB|06 and its outcomes with a dissemination platform to the Lebanese public and diaspora*)
- **Entities with Comparable Experiences** (*Examples include an IDA official relating the Irish experience and recommendations for Lebanon, the ASTF introducing related technology development programs in MENA, studying the Jordanian JV2020 vision, among many others*)

TECHLEB|06 envisions two non-exclusive pools of participants:

- I) Those interested in learning about and potentially contributing towards technology development in Lebanon, yet lack the necessary background and implementation vehicles to do so, and
- II) Those aware of the status quo, challenges facing technology development, and ongoing initiatives in this domain, and are willing to or already involved in efforts echoing the conference's mission

Accordingly, the success of TECHLEB|06 will be proportional to:

- The number of participants it moves from Pool I to Pool II, and
- The extent to which it can capitalize on and help put into motion the ideas, energies, and aspirations of Pool II participants

### *Program & Format*

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The TECHLEB|06 conference program is incrementally evolving as the Planning Committee incorporates feedback from stakeholders, online survey results, and potential speaker nominations and submissions. The program will ensure that the conference objectives and attendees are best served with the appropriate conference content, structure, and format.

Specific themes that the conference program aims to accommodate are (*non-exhaustive, random order listing*):

- ✓ Accurate survey of status quo: current constraints, efforts underway, & planned initiatives
- ✓ Key drivers needed for a thriving export-driven technology sector
- ✓ Challenges facing entrepreneurs, startups, and direct VC funding in Lebanon
- ✓ Requirements for indigenous companies to achieve global market access
- ✓ Candidate high-tech industries where Lebanon may hold regional competitive advantage
- ✓ Strategies for combating brain drain, retaining human capital, and attracting expatriates
- ✓ Lessons learned from other technology-related economic booms
- ✓ Success stories and failures of Lebanese technology companies competing globally
- ✓ Success stories and failures of multinational companies offshoring to Lebanon
- ✓ Potential for commercial Research & Development and R&D outsourcing
- ✓ Need for business and technology nonprofit incubators
- ✓ Respective expectations from/pledges to other players, namely the Lebanese government
- ✓ Highlights of a Lebanon 2025 vision
- ✓ ...

The conference will span two days in mid-2006 and will feature a number of sessions (registration, orientation, plenary, breakout, concurrent, and/or closing) and communication vehicles (keynotes, presentations, panels, colloquies, workshops, case-studies, poster sessions, and/or roundtables).

MIT has been chosen as the venue for **TECHLEB|06** because of:

- The Institute's internationally-acclaimed reputation as a leader in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, all of which are hallmarks of the conference
- The high hopes placed on Lebanon's youth and human capital, hence the choice of a leading academic institution to cradle and launch the conference's mission

*TECHLEB|06 is being organized by the Lebanese Club at MIT (LCM) and the International Network of Lebanese Entrepreneurs and Technologists (INLET), which is projected for official launch during the conference.*