



National Investment Reform Agenda

Workshop

United Arab Emirates

- Draft Agenda -

**21st December, 2006
JW Marriott Hotel
Dubai**

**Organised by the Ministry of Economy and
Planning of UAE and
the MENA – OECD Investment Programme**

Objective

The meeting is one in a series of workshops to review the investment climate reform progress made by countries participating in the MENA-OECD Investment Programme. The Programme aims to mobilise private investment as a driving force for growth and employment. Since 2005, a number of countries participating in the Programme have developed **National Investment Reform Agendas (NIRAs)** with input from the private sector. These Reform Agendas comprise concrete investment policy reform measures aimed at improving the countries' investment environment. They define measurable targets in areas such as investment regulation, investment promotion, corporate governance, financial sector development and others. The topics of this workshop reflect the items of priority to the Government of the U.A.E., represented by H.H. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi

Meeting Focus

The workshop will cover key issues of investment policy reform currently on the reform agenda of the U.A.E. Government, including sectorial liberalisation and establishment of a comprehensive investment law. Experts from MENA countries and the OECD will present on the issues and lead the discussions. At the end of the meeting, a set of recommendations will emerge on how to implement concrete reform steps.

Participants

The workshop will bring together government Ministries and agencies involved in reform efforts to improve the investment climate in the U.A.E., representatives from international organisations, and the private sector.

Documentation

The relevant meeting documents together with a more detailed agenda will be distributed to participants in advance of the meeting. For information about the Programme please visit our website:

www.oecd.org/mena/investment

MEETING ITINERARY

Chairpersons of the meeting:

H.H. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi, Minister of Economy, U.A.E

Mr. Richard Hecklinger, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

Moderator:

Dr. Rainer Geiger, Director, MENA-OECD Investment Programme

09:00-09:30	Opening Session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.H. Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi, Minister of Economy, U.A.E. • Mr. Richard Hecklinger, Deputy Secretary General, OECD • Dr. El Sayed Torky, Representative of Programme Chair ,Ministry of Investment, Egypt
9 :30-11:30	Session I : Best Practice in Sector Liberalisation
	<p><i>On a federal level, foreign ownership in the UAE is restricted to 49 % in sectors such as tourism, health and other services (with the exception of Free Zones, where 100% ownership is permitted). This session aims to discuss possible advantages and disadvantages of opening up UAE sectors outside the Free Zones to greater foreign ownership. Best practice from the MENA region and OECD countries on sector liberalisation and the benefits which can be derived for the domestic business community will be presented.</i></p>
	<p>Panel I – Foreign investment in the UAE: Trends and Prospects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory presentation by the Ministry of Economy highlighting major trends of foreign investment in the UAE’s FEZs as well as describing potential sectors for further liberalisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Aref Al Farra, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Economy, Abu Dhabi ○ Ms. Suzan Saba, Legal Expert, Ministry of Economy, Abu Dhabi • Private Sector Case Study: How can domestic business benefit from foreign direct investment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Yosif Ali, EMKE Group , Abu Dhabi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Case Study: Irish success in FDI Attraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Barry Condron, Director, XMI Consult, Ireland
	<p>Panel II – Policy Advocacy on the Benefits of FDI</p> <p><i>The panel addresses the challenges faced by Ministries and Agencies (IPAs) to communicate the benefits of FDI and investment climate reforms to the broader public.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Spencer Wilson, Media Relations Officer, Communication Department, OECD ○ Dr. Niveen Al Shafei, Economic Advisor and Strategic Planning Manager, General Authority for Investment and Free Zones, Egypt ○ TBD, Ministry of Finance and Industry, UAE
11 :30-11 :45	Coffee Break
11 :45-13 :30	Session II : Towards a Unified Investment law
	<p><i>This session seeks to address benefits of combining investment regulation in a unified federal law. Following the conclusions of the previous session, this part of the workshop will address the potential features of a comprehensive Investment Law in the U.A.E.</i></p>
	<p>Panel I – Regulation of Access</p> <p><i>The session will address the benefits of a unified investment law substituting the current structure of investment regulation in the UAE. Key provisions of such a law could include regulation of access for foreign investors (negative list, screening and approval procedures).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Alexander Böhmer, Executive Programme Manager, MENA-OECD Investment Programme ○ Mr. Mohammed Omar, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Abu Dhabi ○ Mr. Hamad Bu'maim, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dubai
	<p>Panel II – The Effectiveness of Incentives for Investor Attraction</p> <p><i>The session will discuss the regulatory and financial incentives for the attraction of high value-added FDI into Emirates, based on similar experiences of other MENA and OECD member countries.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Nermine Al Shimy, Economic Advisor and Strategic Planning Manager, Jebel Ali Free Economic Zone ○ Mr. Hans Christiansen, Senior Economist, Investment Division, OECD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dr. Jafar Al Sayegh, Chief of Mirco-Economic Planning, Ministry of Finance, Bahrain
13:30 - 14:00	Conclusions
14:00 - 15:30	Lunch

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