

**FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH
PROACTIVE POLICIES**

- Draft Agenda -

**Working Group on SME Policy,
Entrepreneurship and Human Capital
Development**

- 18th November -

&

Enterprise Financing Network

- 19th November -

Organised by

The MENA-OECD Investment Programme

In Cooperation with

**The MENA Centre for Investment,
Manama, Bahrain**

Venue

The Diplomat Radisson SAS Hotel
Manama, Bahrain

Objective:

The **MENA-OECD Investment Programme**, in cooperation with the MENA Centre for Investment of Bahrain, invites you to take part in a joint event of the first regional meeting of Working Group 2 of the Programme on SME Policy, Entrepreneurship and Human Capital Development. The meeting will be followed by the Meeting of the MENA-OECD Enterprise Financing Network (EFN) ©.

Working Group on SME Policy Entrepreneurship and Human Capital Development

The aim of the Working Group is to build upon the requests of the MENA Ministers and to deepen the policy dialogue and common agreements as initiated within the October 2008 Steering Group of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme, and recalling the final Declaration of MENA-OECD Ministers in November 2007 stressing,

“...the importance of promoting positive interactions between foreign investment and local enterprise development through measures such as development of skills, local entrepreneurship, industrial clusters and SME access to finance.”

To this end, **the MENA-OECD Investment Programme** invites participants to the first meeting to explore these issues and to agree upon the programme of work for the Working Group through an event structured around its existing network, such as the EFN© and relevant OECD instruments, policy guidelines and objectives such as the *Bologna Process*, and the forthcoming *2008 Enterprise Policy Assessment*.

Enterprise Financing Network (EFN) ©

Building on the success of the last MENA-OECD Business Forum and the first Women Business Leaders Forum and in order to foster the input provided by the private sector into the MENA-OECD Investment Programme’s activities such as the work done under the umbrella of The MENA-OECD Enterprise Financing Network (EFN) ©, the meeting will discuss the launch of a **MENA-OECD Business Council** aiming at becoming the regional voice of business for MENA by providing ways for private sector participants to effectively input into key policy reforms relevant to business climate and competitiveness.

As such, the key objective of the Meeting is to improve the conditions for financing entrepreneurship by:

- Discussing the impact of the current financial turmoil on access to finance from an SME point of view and ways to deal with the growing threat of the credit crunch;
- Launching the **MENA-OECD Business Council** with the purpose of exchanging views on key policy priorities for the MENA region and decide upon the EFN Board, Structure and Membership;
- Provide inputs into two high impact regional projects:
 - The **“MENA 100”** : a business plan competition leading to a regional platform to connect entrepreneurs with financiers, business angels and investment funds
 - The **“MENA 21”**: distilling good practices from the most competitive MENA firms.

Participation and Documentation

MENA and OECD participants are invited to send experts in the areas of SME policy, investment promotion, equity financing, skills development and FDI linkages. As in the previous meeting, other key partners, who are engaged in activities in these areas, are also invited, including Islamic Development Bank, Arab League, Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, Union of Arab Banks, World Bank, UNIDO, UNDP, IFC PEP MENA, UNCTAD, European Commission and the European Investment Bank, Transparency International, and other partners. Private sector engagement is essential for the success of the Investment Programme, as they can provide insights to issues affecting investment decisions and serve as a “reality check” for policy reform plans. Representatives from the Arab Business Council, Arab Investors’ Union, Union of Arab Banks, MENA-OECD Business Network, Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) and Business Councils in MENA countries are invited to join the meeting. Experts from OECD countries and from the Secretariat will be present at the meeting.

The relevant meeting documents will be distributed at the meeting and posted on: www.oecd.org/mena/investment

**MEETING 1: WORKING GROUP 2 ON SME POLICY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

Day 1: 18 November 2008

8.30 a.m.	Registration
9.00 a.m.	Welcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Zakaria Ahmed HEJRES – Deputy Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board (EDB) • Mr. Anthony O’SULLIVAN – Head of the Private Sector Development Division, OECD • Mr. Mohamed AGREBI – Director, SMEs Development Directorate, Ministry of Industry, Energy and SMEs, Tunisia
9.30 a.m.	Panel I: Promoting High Growth Enterprises – Key Issues
	<p><i>Session moderated by:</i> Mr. Antonio FANELLI – Deputy Head of the Private Sector Development Division, OECD</p> <p>Using results from a recent OECD enterprise policy assessment report involving 8 Arab countries, the session will identify barriers for high growth enterprises including: access to finance, market access, and skills development. The panel discussants are invited to comment on how these policy challenges will be addressed in the Working Group by sharing their country and private sector experiences.</p> <p><i>Panel Presentations and Moderated discussion</i></p>
11.00 a.m.	Coffee
11.15 a.m.	Panel II: Access to Finance in Times of Financial Crisis
	<p><i>Session moderated by:</i> Mr. Anthony O’Sullivan – Head of Private Sector Development Division, OECD</p> <p>The OECD will present an overview of access to finance in MENA countries for SMEs. The session will invite panellists to discuss how the impact of the financial crisis and the resulting credit crunch has affected certain segments of the market in accessing financing their respective countries. Finally, it will look into policy options for governments and financial institutions to consider in order increase liquidity for SMEs. This proposed output activity area aims towards a set of policy advice/guidelines for countries.</p> <p><i>Panel Presentations and Moderated discussion</i></p>
12.45 p.m.	Lunch
2.00 p.m.	Panel III: Bridging Skills Gap and Fostering Entrepreneurship
	<p><i>Session moderated by:</i> Mr. Hashim HUSSEIN – Head, UNIDO Investment and Promotion Office, Bahrain</p> <p>The session will provide perspectives on current projects and programmes which aim to bridge the skills gap in MENA countries. In particular, it will examine skills development as a means to encourage entrepreneurs, including from youth and women’s groups, to generate innovative, value-adding activities. The OECD will present its current work in assessing human capital development.</p> <p><i>Panel Presentations and Moderated discussion</i></p>
3.30 p.m.	Moving Forward: Work Programme and Outputs of the Working Group 2
	<p><i>Session moderated by:</i> Mr. Alexander BÖHMER – Head of the MENA-OECD Investment Programme</p> <p>A proposal for a work programme and outputs leading up to the 3rd Ministerial meeting will be introduced by the OECD and discussed.</p> <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
4.30 p.m.	End of Day 1
8.00 p.m.	Dinner

Day 2: 19 November 2008

8.30 a.m.	Recap of Day 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Zakaria Ahmed HEJRES – Deputy Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board (EDB) • Mr. Anthony O’SULLIVAN – Head of the Private Sector Development Division, OECD
9.00 a.m.	Opening Panel: Impacts of the financial crisis on the MENA region
	<p><i>Session moderated by: Mr. Peter JUNGEN</i> – CEO, Peter Jungen Holding GmbH, President, European Enterprise Institute, Germany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) What’s the real exposure of MENA countries to the financial crisis and are there disparities between the different countries? (ii) What is the impact on access to finance and how can the current liquidity in the region be mobilised more effectively for the benefit of both suppliers and consumers of financial services to stem the tide of the credit crunch? (iii) How to encourage and support the increase of the supply side by promoting relevant proposals to financial institutions such as Sovereign Wealth Funds? (iv) What would be the role of responsible business conduct to help limiting the impact of the financial turmoil? <p><i>Moderated discussion</i></p>
11.00 a.m.	Coffee
11.30 a.m.	Working Session 1: Proposed launch of the MENA-OECD Business Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The purpose of the council would be to provide high level advice from business leaders to policy makers on priorities to reform the business climate in MENA and OECD countries and to ensure follow through on advice by sponsoring high impact projects that foster innovation, entrepreneurship and competitiveness; (ii) The objectives, key outputs and the structural organisation of the council will be discussed and finalised together with the participants. <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
12.30 p.m.	Press Conference
1.00 p.m.	Lunch
2.30 p.m.	Working Session 2: Launch of high impact regional projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The “MENA 100”: provide update on progress achieved and agree on next steps such as criteria of selection, members to be part of the selection committee etc; (ii) The “MENA 21”: review and discuss the concept paper and secure support for the project; (iii) Present the statement of the first regional task force on Responsible Business Conduct held in Cairo on 26 October and discuss ways to move forward; (iv) Discuss the outcomes of the first Women Business Leaders forum and define a specific project. <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
4.00 p.m.	Moving Forward
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Zakaria Ahmed HEJRES – Deputy Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board (EDB) • Mr. Anthony O’SULLIVAN – Head of the Private Sector Development Division, OECD
4.30 p.m.	End of Event
8.00 p.m	Dinner

About the MENA-OECD Investment Programme

THE MENA-OECD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME was established in 2004 at the request of Middle East and North African (MENA) countries to provide advice on improving the investment policy climate. Facing considerable competition from other regions and a growing pressure from the young workforce, several MENA countries are implementing significant economic and regulatory reforms to increase private sector participation in their economies.

THE KEY OBJECTIVE OF THE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME is to mobilise private investment – foreign, regional and domestic – as a driving force for economic growth and employment throughout the region. The Programme offers a forum for results-oriented policy dialogue bringing together MENA and OECD practitioners. It supports reform efforts of MENA governments to enhance the investment climate by:

- strengthening country capacity for designing, implementing and monitoring investment policy reforms;
- creating a network of dialogue between investment policy makers from MENA and OECD countries;
- creating a favourable environment for employment creation through investment climate improvements;
- assisting ministries and government agencies to co-operate and co-ordinate their work;
- reinforcing the impact of development initiatives supported by international, regional and bilateral donors.

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For additional details, please refer to the following website www.oecd.org/mena/investment