



MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme

Programme of Work 2018

Meeting of the MENA-OECD Steering Group

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OECD



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1. Introduction

The [MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme](#) (the Programme) has completed the first year of implementation of its fourth mandate (2016-2020). The Programme is one of the two pillars of the [MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness](#) (the Initiative).

The Programme of Work 2018 (POW) gives an overview of the regional activities planned for 2018, based on the overall Programme of Work 2016-2020 which was endorsed at the [2016 MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference](#) in Tunis in line with the [Tunis Declaration](#). This document is structured around the focus areas of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme, which are (1) Horizontal Steering and Multidisciplinary Cohesion; (2) Women's economic empowerment; (3) Investment and trade; (4) SME and entrepreneurship policy; (5) Corporate governance; (6) Private sector mobilisation and social dialogue; (7) Building a more competitive environment through enhanced integrity in business; and (8) Economic resilience in fragile situations.

Progress of the Programme will be assessed using this Programme of Work as a frame of reference; the POW thus forms the basis for the **monitoring** of the Programme. Upon renewal of the Initiative's mandate for 2016-2020 (MENA IV), it was agreed to further develop mechanisms to assess impact and measure progress in reform implementation at regional and national levels. It was suggested that the monitoring and evaluation of MENA IV should be further improved through the reporting of results in a logical framework, structured around the outputs and outcomes of the activities and that progress would be reported to the Steering Group, the Programme donors and the OECD External Relations Committee. Hence a proposal to improve the monitoring of short, medium and long term results of the Initiative has been developed and proposes an improved monitoring system for the two pillars of the MENA-OECD Initiative. The considerations developed in this document build both on agreed international donor considerations and practices as well as the ongoing monitoring of the Initiative, including through donor reporting. The monitoring document will be discussed during the meeting of the MENA-OECD Steering Group.

Horizontal Steering and Multidisciplinary Cohesion

In 2018, the Programme will continue to support the region's competitiveness agenda with a whole-of-government strategic vision. The **governance structure** of the Programme ensures the ownership of MENA countries through the chairmanship of the Initiative and the different networks. It promotes policy cohesion across the two pillars of the Initiative and across the thematic areas of work. The Steering Group and the Advisory Board are the governing bodies of the Initiative and provide strategic leadership. The Steering Group meets on a yearly basis to review progress and to discuss and provide guidance for future work. The Programme of Work and Budget was adopted at the [2016 MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference](#) in Tunis. The 2018 Advisory Board on 23 January gave consideration to the 2018 Programme of Work prior to submission to the 2018 Steering Committee.

High-level policy dialogue and exchange of experiences for reform: building the political agenda

The Programme will maintain a **constant political and institutional engagement** with the region. A range of meetings between senior OECD staff and high-level MENA representatives are planned for 2018 to ensure a high level of political dialogue; the MENA contribution to the strategic thinking of the OECD; and the OECD policy advocacy in support of successful economic reform in the region.

Tunisia will continue to lead the regional work as co-chair of the Programme and reinforce its bilateral collaboration with the OECD. The official visit of H.E. Yousef Chahed, the Head of Government of Tunisia

to the OECD, is under preparation. The chair of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme and Minister of Development, Investment and International Cooperation in Tunisia, H.E. Mr. Zied Ladhari, and OECD Chief Economist Mr. Alvaro Pereira will launch the Economic Survey of Tunisia on the 28th of March in Tunis. This will be a new opportunity for the OECD to express its support to the Tunisian economic and political reforms

Egypt is particularly active in its engagement with the OECD. The Government of Egypt will continue to consult the OECD on the issues of investment, infrastructure and women's empowerment. H.E. Dr Sahar Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Co-operation of Egypt and co-chair of the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum will participate in a number of OECD events in 2018. H.E. Dr Hala El Saeed, Minister of Planning and Follow-Up and Administration Reform of Egypt will attend the OECD Council on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in March 2018. The priorities of the G77 under the 2018 Egyptian Presidency are very much in line with the focus areas of the Programme and will be presented at the OECD by Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister for Multilateral Economic Affairs, Mr. Saeed Hindam to explore how to best capitalise on this opportunity.

The Secretary General of the OECD, Mr. Angel Gurría, will visit **Morocco** to mark the successful completion of the Morocco Country Programme, and pave the way towards a new phase of cooperation. Consultations are ongoing for the organisation of a back-to-back high-level dialogue between MENA and sub-Saharan Africa in the area of competitiveness hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Existing ties with selected Gulf countries will be further consolidated throughout 2018. Relationships with the United Arab Emirates have been reinforced by the visit of the OECD Secretary General in February 2018 and will be followed up with bilateral exchanges. High-level officials from **Saudi Arabia** visited the OECD in March 2018, in preparation of the Saudi G20 Presidency in 2020.

The OECD Centre in Istanbul is scheduled to open in 2018. The Centre will act as a regional hub for capacity development and high-level policy dialogue. It will support the OECD's existing regional initiatives, including the MENA-OECD Initiative. **Turkey**, the co-chair of the Competitiveness Programme, expressed interest in hosting one of the MENA-OECD regional meetings in 2018 at the Center.

Enhancing the role of MENA countries in OECD instruments and tools

Additional efforts will be made towards bringing MENA economies closer to **OECD standards and bodies** as well as encouraging policy changes in view of achieving inclusive growth. In March 2018, a number of MENA countries will participate in a meeting on the OECD Convention on combating bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions, in view of a possible adherence. As adherents to the Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia benefited from Investment Policy Reviews (IPRs) and they participate in the Investment Committee. Their contribution to the work of the Investment committee will be intensified in 2018. A second IPR began in Egypt in 2017 and will continue throughout 2018. Discussions are ongoing with Morocco on the possibility of conducting an IPR. The Morocco Country Programme will continue to work towards the completion of its programme of work, in particular in terms of adherence to instruments and participation in Committees. The Country Programme aims to reinforce Morocco's participation in nine OECD Committees, either through an upgrade of its participation status, or inclusion in the list of invitees. Adherence to nine legal instruments¹ will allow Morocco to strengthen its

¹ Recommendation of the Council of Public Procurement, Recommendation of the Council on OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service, Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity, Recommendation of the Council on

position vis a vis the OECD and the international community, through alignment with internationally recognized standards in specific key sectors, such as public integrity, public investment and fiscal policies².

Policy coherence and alignment

Throughout its second year of implementation, the Programme will further **enhance connections between policy areas in support of competitiveness**, building on initial reflections and exchanges between the different Working Groups and Fora of the Programme. Some linkages between different policy areas of the Programme have already been established (e.g. between gender and SMEs) while others require additional work (e.g. between business integrity and investment policies, or between trade policies and gender).

Collaboration with other OECD Directorates will continue to be a main focus area in 2018. For example, closer collaboration between the Competitiveness Programme and the Governance Programme, the two pillars of the Initiative, will be further pursued throughout 2018 and beyond with specific focus on linking activities on women's economic and political empowerment. The fight against corruption is another area which warrants particular attention and efforts. Indeed, corruption is a major obstacle to sustainable economic, political and social development as it distorts market mechanisms, entails misallocation of resources and alters decision-making. The OECD has developed a number of integrity tools which the Programme will bring together to support investments in sectors and programmes which present the best value for money and limit corrupt activities offering the best prospects for personal enrichment. This will involve increasing joint approaches between the two pillars of the Initiative as well as with other OECD directorates.

The new mandate of the Programme (2016-20), as outlined in the Tunis Declaration, emphasises the importance of **inclusiveness** within the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme. There is a regional case for inclusive growth, as the MENA region has high levels of income inequality; high unemployment rates (especially among women and youth); a large informal sector and low civil participation. In order to address these issues, discussions have started with the OECD Inclusive Growth Initiative (IGI), which is developing a policy framework for inclusive growth that could potentially be applied to the Programme.

Collaboration with international organisations and financial institutions

The recently signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and UN Women as well as the upcoming signature of a MoU with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) will certainly facilitate collaboration at regional level and enhance practical in-country support. The concrete implementation of these MoUs will start in 2018. Throughout 2018, projects will be explored with UfM; work on resilience will be planned with the IDB and different UN agencies will be involved in the activities of all the focus areas of the Programme.

Multiple partnerships and dialogue efforts are key towards delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As outlined in this POW, each thematic focus area of the Programme makes

Effective Public Investment Across Levels of Government, Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, Declaration for the Future of the Internet Economy, Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Internet Policy Making, Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship and OECD Action Plan for Youth

² Investment Committee, Public Governance Committee, Regional Development Policy Committee, Committee on Fiscal Affairs, Committee on Digital Economy Policy, Committee on Consumer Policy, Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy, Tourism Committee and Fisheries Committee

reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All the work that the Programme has planned for 2018 will contribute to the realization of the SDGs and further discussions with Governments will be held to assess how we can further support them in achieving the Goals. The Programme will continue to offer a neutral platform for discussion where stakeholders can discuss their views on the SDGs. In addition, specific efforts on data collection (e.g. on women's economic empowerment) will take place in 2018 that will support Governments in their reporting on the SDGs.

Emerging policy issues and new areas of interest

The Tunis Declaration, as well as the Advisory Board of the Programme, emphasises the importance of adapting the Programme to emerging. The Programme has identified a number of **emerging topics** that will receive special attention in 2018. In line with G20 focus areas and OECD horizontal priorities, the MENA-OECD Programme will further engage in supporting countries to build a reliable and conducive framework for long-term and high-quality infrastructure development. The Programme is further building the statistical capacity of countries and is working towards inclusion of MENA countries into OECD databases and specific efforts in this regard are made on women's economic empowerment data collection. The theme of improved inclusive growth with strong focus on youth will be taken into account in 2018.

The impact of economic reforms in the different countries and regions will be assessed through economic analysis, connecting all the policy areas of the Programme. Collaboration with the OECD Economics Directorate will be envisaged in 2018 to provide an overview of recent economic developments in different countries and the region as a whole. This information could then be used as a basis for policy debate in and between countries of the region.

In 2018, topics that remain priorities for the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme and have to be **addressed at a horizontal level** are the need for enhanced social dialogue as well as women's economic empowerment. In addition, the acquired expertise in selected MENA countries (Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia) will be used to reach out to sub-Saharan African countries.

Dissemination of results and enhanced communication

The Programme furthers efforts to have higher visibility through enhanced communication in three languages, English, French and Arabic, for published material and in English and French for the web. The Competitiveness Programme brochure and focus area flyers (with a new visual identity) have been updated for the March 2018 Steering Group Meeting, and the Active with MENA Brochure will be updated in the autumn. At the same time the website is being restructured to create a MENA regional platform where the Programme's work will be highlighted, but also where users will be able to access information on MENA projects throughout the OECD. This is a major project which aims to give users a clearer and more informative picture of the diverse forms of MENA engagement at the OECD. For high-profile events and projects, the Competitiveness Programme will continue to feature its activities and impact through traditional media and social media outlets.

Improving monitoring and implementation

In 2018, the Steering Group will discuss a proposal to enhance the **monitoring** of the Initiative's outputs, outcomes and impacts during its fourth mandate. This proposal will seek to monitor the overall impact of the Initiative as well as the tailored activities both in the regional networks as well as country specific support. Reports on the Programme's progress will be submitted to the OECD External Relations Committee as well as to the Programme's donors.

2. Women's Economic Empowerment

Regional network

The [MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum \(WEEF\)](#) was launched in October 2017 as a regional network for policy dialogue, peer learning and exchange of experience and good practices for fostering women's economic empowerment.

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

H.E. Dr Sahar Nasr, Minister of Investment and International Co-operation of Egypt

H.E. Marie-Claire Swärd Capra, Ambassador of Sweden to Algeria.

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The 2018 WEEF meeting is planned for the second part of the year. Tunisia expressed an interest in hosting the WEEF in Tunisia during the event on 'Legal frameworks and their impact on women's economic empowerment: challenges and good practices' held on 7 March 2018 at the OECD in Paris. Topics that will be addressed during the 2018 WEEF include:

- Actions and practices supportive of women's economic empowerment in the MENA region
- Data collection in support of women's economic empowerment in the MENA region
- Monitoring of countries' institutional and legislative changes in support of women's economic empowerment in the MENA region
- Directory of initiatives supporting women's economic empowerment in the MENA region.
- Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals will be a cross-cutting area throughout the 2018 WEEF and its preparatory work.

2018 Deliverables of the component

The Programme will develop analytical work to reinforce evidence based policy making.

- **Two papers** will be produced with focus on **actions and practices supportive of women's economic empowerment in the MENA region** and **data collection in support of women's economic empowerment in the MENA region**. The objective is to present these papers in the 2018 WEEF and further enrich them with the findings of the Forum.
- Enhanced efforts will be made to **mainstream** women's economic empowerment throughout other areas of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme, in particular on SMEs and entrepreneurship, corporate governance and resilience in fragile situations.
- A **directory of initiatives** supporting women's economic empowerment in the MENA region will be regularly updated in light of additional information collected.
- **Raise awareness** and work with countries towards **adapting their laws and regulations** to international and constitutional commitments on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Key findings and policy recommendations of the OECD publication "[Women's Economic Empowerment in selected MENA countries: the impact of legal frameworks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia](#)" are being discussed during national consultations among representatives from government, business and civil society with a view to identify areas for further policy reform. Consultations were held

for Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia in 2017 and in 2018 consultations are planned to be held in Algeria and Egypt.

Intra-OECD collaboration

Gender equality and women's empowerment is at the top of OECD's agenda. In the [OECD Programme of Work and Budget](#), there are 103 outputs across 24 Output Areas and 16 Output Groups that have a focus on gender. The work carried out through the WEEF takes into account the OECD's experience in fostering women's economic empowerment, including the [OECD Gender Initiative](#) which promotes the implementation of the [2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship](#). Collaboration with the [MENA-OECD Governance Programme](#) will be enhanced and in upcoming consultations and meetings, the work will focus increasingly on women's economic and political empowerment. Furthermore, and building on the event held on 'Legal frameworks and their impact on women's economic empowerment: challenges and good practices' on 7 March 2018 at the OECD, further collaboration and researching of synergies will be explored between OECD regional programmes.

Sustainable Development Goals

Gender equality and women's empowerment are a separate SDG (SDG 8) and mainstreamed throughout Agenda 2030. The 2017 WEEF included a session on 'women's economic empowerment and the SDGs' and the 2018 WEEF as well as all other activities of the component will make reference to the SDGs. The information researched through the papers can be used by countries to report progress against the SDGs in the area of women's economic empowerment.

Gender Mainstreaming

Enhanced efforts will be made to mainstream gender throughout the other components of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme in particular on SMEs and entrepreneurship, corporate governance and resilience in fragile situations. The impact of regulations pertaining to investment or trade as well as the specific consideration pertaining to women and business integrity will be considered and preparatory work for addressing this matter will be undertaken in 2018 for possible debate in 2019.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organizations

The activities are carried out in partnership with other players such as different UN agencies, the League of Arab States (LAS), the Union of Arab Banks, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. A project proposal was submitted in October 2017 to the LAS on engaging in joint monitoring of selected countries' in policies supportive of women's economic empowerment. The Programme will seek to further this proposal with the LAS. In addition, building on the collaboration with the UfM in preparation of the UfM 2017 Ministerial Declaration and the agreed MoU, concrete synergies and collaboration will be discussed.

3. Investment and Trade

Regional network

The new Working Group on Investment and Trade was launched in September 2017 with the aims of fostering policy dialogue around the trade and investment nexus to enhance policy coherence and

harmonisation, and expanding relevant OECD tools to MENA countries to support policy orientations, implementation and evaluation.

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

H.E Mr. Fareedon Hartouqa, Secretary General, Jordan Investment Commission

Mr. Ryotaro Suzuki, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Delegation of Japan to the OECD.

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The 2018 meeting of the Working Group will take place in September in Amman or Paris (tbc). Following the September 2017 meeting, participants agreed to focus on:

- Providing evidence on the trade and investment nexus in the MENA region, by fostering analysis on challenges and barriers; supporting collection and harmonisation of statistical data; focusing on digitalisation, services and regional value chains; better analysing balance between national objectives and trade and investment openness, and discussing policy recommendations.
- Supporting current trade and investment reforms by sharing experiences between MENA and OECD countries, using best practices and OECD tools; measuring the impact of reforms with a particular focus on distributional impact at the socio-economic level, territorial development, informality, job creation for youth, and women empowerment; ensuring that inclusion is at the core of reforms; and improving policy coherence.
- Strengthening regional trade and investment integration through policies fostering diversification of products, markets and partnerships, support to regional organisations and impact analysis of trade and investment agreements.
- Improving the dialogue with the private sector by exploring how the private sector can better support governments in facilitating economically sound, environmentally sustainable, clean and socially just private investment that help create jobs and better connecting business associations.

2018 Deliverables of the component

The deliverables for 2018 include the following:

- Further work will be carried out with countries to **make better use of OECD statistical tools** ([FDI Benchmark Definition](#), [TiVA](#)) and benchmarking instruments ([trade facilitation and quality investment indicators](#), MED IPA survey, [Services Trade and FDI Restrictiveness Indexes](#))
- **4 regional capacity-building and peer-learning activities** under the [EU-OECD Programme on promoting investment in the Mediterranean](#) and **3 national workshops**
- More active participation of MENA countries in the [OECD Investment Committee](#)
- **4 functioning National Contact Points** to implement the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#)
- Updated and expanded **OECD draft policy paper “Exploring the investment and trade nexus in the MENA region”** for the 2018 Working Group meeting
- The **Investment Policy Review of Egypt** ([MENA Transition Fund Project](#))
- The **Project Insight on Investment Policies in Jordan** (MENA Transition Fund Project)
- Enhanced **synergies with regional organisations**
- **Improved involvement of the private sector** through the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board (BAB)

Intra-OECD collaboration

Investment and trade are core engines of the global economy and the OECD has been working for years on these issues. The activities of the component are carried out in close collaboration with the OECD Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF/INV), the Economics Department, the Trade and Agriculture Directorate (TAD), the Statistics Directorate (STD) and the Development Centre.

Sustainable Development Goals

This work supports MENA economies in complying with SDG 17 by promoting open trading systems, improving policy coherence and enhancing data. It also contributes to the fulfilment of SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 9 (industry innovation and infrastructure).

Gender Mainstreaming

The meetings of the Working Group will provide a platform to raise awareness of policy-makers on gender implications in trade and investment policies, building on the recommendations of the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board and Women Economic Empowerment Forum.

Partnerships with International and Regional Organisations

The activities are carried out in partnership with the EU, UfM, Agadir technical Unit and development banks.

4. SME and Entrepreneurship Policy

Regional network

The last meeting of the [Working Group on SME policy and entrepreneurship](#) took place in July 2017. The main objective of this Working Group is to facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices for the development of SMEs and entrepreneurs as drivers of competitiveness, jobs and inclusive growth. The meeting helped to promote the role of SMEs in inclusion, diversification and job creation, including for women. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange on recent reforms on SME policies since the publication of the [SME Policy Index \(SMEPI\) for the Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa](#) in 2014 (in the context of an interim assessment of the SMEPI being carried out by the OECD and the EU).

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

Mr Sadok Bejja, Director General for the Promotion of SMEs, Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Tunisia.

Ms Maria Ludovica Agro, Director General of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion of Italy

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The 2018 meeting of the Working Group is planned to take place in September in Tunis or in Paris (tbc). The meeting will focus on:

- Concrete initiatives around the thematic priorities identified by the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme for 2016-2020, namely: a) improving business environments; b) fostering entrepreneurship and SME growth; c) facilitating access to finance; and d) enhancing SME policymaking.

- How to mainstream those priorities towards the economic empowerment of women across the region. This in line with the mandate of the MENA-OECD 2016 Ministerial Conference taking into account the work of the MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum.
- Updates on work of other relevant policy networks under the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme such as the Economic Resilience Task Force (ERTF), the WEEF, the Working Group on Corporate Governance and the Working Group on Investment and Trade.

2018 Deliverables of the component

Other regional deliverables and activities for 2018 in the context of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme include:

- The **publication of the main reforms** undertaken by MENA economies since the 2014 SMEPI and the identification of priority actions.
- The organisation of the yearly **technical workshops on Policies for Competitiveness in the MENA (May) region and on SME and Access to Finance** (November), in collaboration with the IMF Centre in Kuwait.

At the bilateral level, the activities on the MENA Transition Fund projects on SME policies will be taken forward, namely:

- The organisation of **two series of technical seminars** (April and November tbc) and a set of **guidance manuals for Jordan** to implement its National Strategy for SME and Entrepreneurship. These deliverables will focus on three specific elements: institutional coordination and public-private dialogue; SME statistics; and monitoring and evaluation.
- Support for **Libya to implement its Short Term SME Action Plan** (February-April), **develop its SME Law** and develop the **activities of the research department of the SME agency** (Libya Enterprise – tbd).

Other bilateral activities will be explored during 2018 with interested MENA economies and partners, including at the strategic level (e.g. the development or implementation of SME and entrepreneurship strategies), and the specific-policy level (e.g. access to finance, youth entrepreneurship).

Intra-OECD collaboration

The regional and national activities on SME and entrepreneurship policies are framed by the wider work of the OECD on this area, including the [SME Policy Index](#) methodology and its application in various regions, the [Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme](#), and the [Scoreboard on Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs](#). The activities are conducted in collaboration with other OECD Directorates, depending on the topic and including the Public Governance Directorate (GOV), the Statistics Directorate (STD) and the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Local Development and Tourism (CFE).

Gender mainstreaming

The SME and entrepreneurship activities include a special focus on the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the WEEF. This is a topic that is always discussed in the meetings of the Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy and is an angle that is considered in its regional and country specific activities.

Sustainable Development Goals

The work of this focus area will contribute to the implementation of SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organisations

The ILO and UN Women are always invited to take part in the activities of the Working Group. Analytical work is also carried out with other organisations such as the European Training Foundation and the European Commission.

5. Corporate Governance

Regional network

The last meeting of the [MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance](#) took place in December 2017, where a stocktaking exercise of the four thematic priority areas of the MENA Corporate Governance Programme took place. The main aims of the Working Group are to foster a policy dialogue around good corporate governance of private and state-owned enterprises to enhance a level-playing field as well as to expand relevant OECD tools to MENA countries to support policy evaluation and orientations.

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

H.E. Obaid Al Zaabi, CEO of the Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA) of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Gabriela Figueiredo Dias, Chair of the Portuguese Securities Commission

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The 2018 Working Group will take place mid-year 2018 with Portugal as the venue (tbc). For the 2018 meeting it is planned to advance in solutions and policy recommendations over the same thematic priorities. The topics to be included in the 2018 meeting will likely be:

- MENA equity markets and access to finance for growth companies: identification of barriers and identification of public policy priorities
- Transparency and disclosure: priorities for MENA
- Improving gender balance in corporate leadership and enhancing board diversity: ways to overcome barriers
- Improving corporate governance of state-owned enterprises

To actively engage with key actors in the region, focus groups on each of the 4 topics (3-4 key actors from the region) are being established to provide a continuous exchange and to advance in developing policy recommendations for the next event.

2018 Deliverables of the component

The following documents including policy recommendations will be finalized throughout the course of 2018:

- OECD Survey of Corporate Governance Frameworks in MENA
- Capital markets and access to capital for growth companies in the MENA region
- Disclosure and Transparency in the MENA region
- Gender Balance in Corporate Leadership in the MENA region
- State ownership in the MENA region

Intra-OECD collaboration

Supporting implementation of international standards embodied in the [G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance](#) and the [OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises](#), participants in the Working Group share experiences that are adapted to the region's policy reform priorities. The MENA-OECD Working Group on Corporate Governance, managed by the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF/CA), closely collaborates with other OECD Directorates including the Global Relations Secretariat (GRS); Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS); and the Public Governance Directorate (GOV).

Gender mainstreaming

A paper will be finalized in 2018 on Gender Balance in Corporate Leadership in the MENA region and a key topic in the 2018 working group meeting will be 'Improving gender balance in corporate leadership and enhancing board diversity: ways to overcome barriers'.

Sustainable Development Goals

The work carried out under this component is specifically relevant for SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, SDG 8 on decent work and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organizations

International organisations involved in the initiative include Hawkamah, the Institute of Corporate Governance; the Arab Federation of Exchanges; the Union of Arab Securities; the Arab Monetary Fund; World Bank Group - International Finance Corporation; and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

6. Private Sector Mobilisation and Social Dialogue

Regional network

Based on the mandate provided by the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference of October 2016 to establish a Business Advisory Board (BAB), an Initial Preparatory Meeting was held in September 2017, to validate the scope and parameters of the BAB. Integrating public-private dialogue within the Programme has a double goal:

- Directly informing the policy dialogue and exchange of best practices conducted within the existing regional working groups and policy networks
- Taking stock of the state of private sector representation and models of participation in policy-making in MENA countries, and disseminating good practices.

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

Mr. Joaquín Gay de Montellá, Vice-President of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations (CEOE)

The MENA co-chair of the initiative has yet to be determined.

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The launch event of the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board (BAB) is planned for the end of June 2018 Madrid, Spain (tbc). The BAB will discuss priority areas affecting private sector development and social

inclusion in the MENA region and advance a structured, coherent reform agenda, in relation to the Programme's regional working groups. Potential areas for discussions include:

- Increasing FDI spill-over effects to the local economies
- Promoting SME linkages and clusters in high-growth sectors
- Applying standards of responsible business conduct in the MENA private sector

2018 Deliverables of the component

The activities planned for 2018 include:

- The **launch** event of the BAB
- Scoping Note to **map the status of private sector representation and PPD mechanisms** in the Middle East and North Africa and to **identify good practices**
- **3 Training workshops** and capacity-building activities
- **Regional Report** to analyse and better understand the current **status of private sector representation and public-private dialogue (PPD)** mechanisms in the MENA region

Intra-OECD collaboration

The OECD, through its [Inclusive Growth Initiative](#), regards business as central to reduce inequalities and to help shape policy and regulatory environments that favour Inclusive Growth. The BAB will cooperate closely with the [OECD Business and Industry Advisory Council](#) (BIAC) for coordination with its members who are invited to become members to the BAB.

Gender mainstreaming

Analytical work and guidelines will be developed to promote gender balance in senior management and in boards.

Sustainable Development Goals

Agenda 2030 acknowledges the importance of building vibrant and systematic partnerships with the private sector in order to mobilise critical resources to deliver on the SDG objectives and ensure the successful implementation of the SDGs. Social dialogue is particularly relevant in the realization of SDG 8 on decent work.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organizations

Strengthening public-private dialogue in the MENA region requires forging solid alliances and partnerships with regional organisations, academic and research institutions active in the area including the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), World Bank Group and League of Arab States.

7. Building a more competitive environment through enhanced integrity in business

Regional network

The last MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network (MOBIN) meeting took place in March 2017. The main objective of the MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network (MOBIN) meeting is to ensure that participants are familiarised with key OECD anti-corruption and integrity standards, including the [G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance](#), [Good Practice Guidance on Internal Controls, Ethics, and Compliance](#), [Recommendation of the Council for Further Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in](#)

[International Business Transactions](#) and [Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions](#). Public governance recommendations are addressed by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and deserve to be increasingly considered jointly since they are complementary in seeking to achieve impact.

➤ **Co-chairs of the regional network**

Ms Amina Figuigui, Director General of the National Fisheries Office (ONP) of Morocco.

Mr Drago Kos, Chair of the OECD Working Group on Bribery

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

The 2018 MOBIN meeting will be held on 29 March at the OECD in Paris. The event is organised back to back with the OECD Anti-Corruption Integrity Forum (27-28 March) to ensure that public and private sector representatives from the MENA region can take advantage of the annual OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum. The 2018 meeting will build on the 2017 MOBIN meeting and will seek to share tools and practices which allow achieving a cleaner business environment through cooperation involving private and non-governmental actors. Experiences shall be shared on:

- How to setting up an adequate institutional frameworks to engage in public private dialogue.
- The development and implementation of collective actions either by businesses alone or in collaboration between the public sector and other stakeholders (business, civil society).

2018 Deliverables of the component

The following regional activities supporting convergence with international integrity norms will be taking place in 2018:

- Training on "Ways to detect and fight corruption" will take place on 8-11 January 2018 at the IMF Middle East Center in Kuwait for about 30 representatives from the region .
- Special information meeting for government representatives of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia on the norms, standards and accession conditions to the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.
- OECD Global Network of Law Enforcement Practitioners against Transactional Bribery (*tbc*): June 2018.
- Participation in the Working Group on Investment and Trade in October 2018 (see section above). The objective of this Working Group is to enhance awareness-raising of the impact of corruption on the business climate and to present key anti-bribery and integrity standards

Intra-OECD collaboration

The OECD has been a global leader in the fight against corruption for many years and the OECD Anti-corruption and integrity standards are an important area of competence of the organization. This focus area aims to promote key OECD anti-corruption and integrity standards as outlined above. MOBIN works in close collaboration with the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the OECD Anti-Corruption Division (DAF/ACD). Collaboration with the MENA Governance Programme is ongoing in the context of the project "Integrity in business in Morocco" (see below) as well as the Integrity Scan of Morocco. This effort is sought to be extended to the MOBIN as well the integrity efforts by the Governance Programme.

Gender mainstreaming

The MENA Competitiveness Programme's Secretariat supported the "Conference on gender equality in business" on 8 March 2018 at the OECD in organising a session on "Women in compliance" with the view to exploring to what extent this policy area warrants further exploration and could be also addressed in the context of a forthcoming meeting of the MOBIN meeting.

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions includes commitments to fight corruption, increase transparency, tackle illicit financial flows and improve access to information. There is a broad consensus that without meaningful action to reduce corruption, progress towards the other goals is likely to be limited.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organizations

The activities are carried out in collaboration Basel Institute on Governance, and the UNDP project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (ACIAC). Collaboration with the African Development Bank, which is involved in an integrity project in Egypt, will be explored in 2018.

Business Integrity in Morocco project

The Business Integrity in Morocco project (2015-2018) aims to build support for the implementation of practical business integrity measures in selected business areas. It also creates momentum for practical change, in particular by introducing specific anti-corruption measures in procurement procedures. It is expected that subsequent to the project, reform-oriented experts in government, the private sector and civil society will replicate this experience in other sectors.

The project will deliver 3 to 6 national consultation by business sector representatives to develop collective action proposals. A High Level Conference will be organized, possibly jointly with the launch of the Integrity Scan. These activities will be organised jointly with the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, the OECD Anti-Corruption Division and other international organisations to exchange over international standards.

Integrity in Egypt and Integrity in Iraq Projects are under negotiation.

8. Economic resilience in fragile situations

Regional network

The Economic Resilience Task Force (ERTF) was officially launched in July 2017. The main objective of the Task Force is to enhance the role of the private sector to address the specific needs of countries affected by conflict and support them to rebuild their economy.

➤ Co-chairs of the regional network

Ms Alia Abbas, General Director of Economy and Trade, Ministry of Economy and Trade of Lebanon

Mr Abdi Moalin Abdullahi, Manager, Resilience and Social Development Department of the Islamic Development Bank

Dr Christiane Bögemann-Hagedorn, Head of Department, Commissioner for North Africa; the Middle East; Southeast / Eastern Europe and Latin America of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ)

➤ **2018 Meeting of the regional network: dates, venue and topics for discussion**

In 2018, the Economic Resilience Task Force is planning to meet in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in November (tbc) for its annual meeting, hosted this time by the Islamic Development programme. The meeting will discuss the following topics:

- Why building resilient economies will require linking short term responses with structural reforms
- Policies to attract sustainable investment for creating economic opportunities
- How SMEs can drive job creation,
- The political economy and the importance of developing a resilience framework to support successful implementation.

2018 Deliverables of the component

The analytical work based on the background notes prepared for the launch event will be further elaborated, for example on focusing policies to help attract sustainable FDI and support SMEs in contexts of fragility.

Ongoing initiatives and proposals include technical assistance initiatives to:

- Support local institutions **develop SME policies in Libya**
- **Implement SME policies** and contribute to the **implementation of the Compact in Jordan**
- Provide technical assistance for the **development of the Special Economic Zone in Egypt**
- Support **private sector development in Iraq**
- Implement the **Resilience System Analysis with the Palestinian Authority**

Intra-OECD collaboration

The OECD's Global Relations Secretariat and the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) are working closely in this effort in order to ensure synergies with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), including its [International Network on Conflict and Fragility](#) (INCAF).

Gender mainstreaming

The Task Force will focus on identifying women's specific economic needs in fragile state situations. Options will be explored to research the legal status of women migrants/refugees in host countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 1 on ending poverty makes explicit reference to 'building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations'. SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions is also relevant in this regard.

Partnerships with International- and Regional Organizations

In building the work programme on economic resilience in fragile situations, the OECD has increased its co-operation with the United Nations, notably with the United Nations Development Programme (UNCTAD), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Specific co-operation with UNDP took place during the past months, including through the OECD's peer review of the publication "Multi-Country Economic Opportunity Assessment.

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