Working Party of Senior Budget Officials

Draft Agenda: 8th Annual Meeting of Middle East and North Africa Senior Budget Officials (MENA-SBO)

14-15 December 2015
Doha, Qatar

Contact(s): Delphine MORETTI, OECD Headquarters, Paris. Tel. +33 1 45 24 99 80 - email: delphine.moretti@oecd.org

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14-15 December 2015
Doha, Qatar

Co Chairs: Mr. Martin KELLENERS, Germany and Mr. Bader Ahmed AL-QAYED, Qatar.

The meeting is hosted by the Qatari Ministry of Finance. It will be held at the Shark Village and Spa Hotel in Doha.

A welcome reception will be hosted by the Ministry of Finance of Qatar on Sunday 13 December, from 18:00.

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4. **Lower Commodities Prices: Managing the Impact on Public Spending and Long-term Fiscal Sustainability**

In light of weakening global economic growth, many governments pursue strategies to correct and stabilize their public finances. The fall in oil prices creates specific challenges for MENA countries: annual budgets need to adopt a more disciplined approach to public expenditure and fiscal policies need to ensure that, going forward, oil revenue will be managed prudently.

This session will give an update on strategies across OECD member countries for consolidating their public finances. It will focus on Germany’s experience with using fiscal rules for balancing budgets and limiting borrowing, and Norway’s approach to managing oil revenue in support to stable fiscal and economic development over the near and longer term.

Following lead presentations, the floor will be opened to general discussion among all Delegates.

5. **National Development: Integrating Budgeting and Planning**

Strategic planning has shown its worth as a tool for societal transformation in a number of countries over the last decades. However, for such strategic plans to be successful they need to create a common vision that is both aspirational and financially viable. The plan also needs to be dynamic and be able to change in light of new circumstances.

This session will discuss how countries develop, support and finance their strategic plans and how they are integrated into the medium term fiscal framework and annual budget process. It will also discuss the institutional setting for planning and budgeting.

Following a lead presentation, the floor will be opened to general discussion among all Delegates.

From 18:00 **Gala Dinner**

Gala Dinner hosted by the Ministry of Finance of Qatar.

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6. **Performance Budgeting**

Performance budgeting is meant to help governments answer the fundamental questions of what impact policy is having and how can it be done more efficiently and effectively. However, the promise of re-ordering the budget system to link resources to performance, rather than inputs, has not yet fully delivered on its promise. This session aims to discuss key issues with regards to performance budgeting:

- What is performance budgeting: how can performance information be gathered, processed, and used? Are national performance dashboards the place to start or should performance information be focused on the agency level where ‘news you can use’ is more assured?

- What tools are available: A multiplicity of tools are used in performance budgeting – reordering the budget structure, monitoring key performance indicators, performance contracts for Heads of Agencies, systematic evaluations and, most prominently, spending reviews. But this begs the questions: when are these tools most appropriate and how should they be deployed?
Where do we start? Performance budgeting is a journey. No country has got it right and certainly no country got it right in the beginning. There are obvious places to start – e.g. where the delivery of objectives can be counted and places to leave for a later date – performance targets for very exogenously given policy goals such as foreign policy.

Following a lead presentation, the floor will be opened to general discussion among all Delegates.

11:00-11:30 Coffee

11:30-12:30 7. Budgeting in Tunisia

At the request of the Tunisian government, the OECD conducted a review of current budget modernization reforms being undertaken in Tunisia. The review provides a comprehensive overview of the budgeting process and offers other countries an opportunity to comment on specific budgeting issues raised in the review.

Following lead presentations, the floor will be opened to general discussion among all Delegates.

12:30-14:00 Luncheon

14:00-15:30 8. Use of Market-Based Mechanism for Public Service Provision

Governments’ use of market-based mechanisms for public service provision is increasing. The driving force behind this phenomenon is the need for governments to secure increased value for money in their operations and stimulate the development of the private sector. This session will focus on the issues raised with the use of contracting-out (outsourcing), including governance challenges for finance ministries.

Following a lead presentation, the floor will be opened to general discussion among all Delegates.

15:30-16:00 9. Report by the OECD and Future Work Programme

This session is designed to update participants on current and future projects by the OECD in the field of budgeting and public expenditures.

It is also an opportunity for participants to identify emerging priority areas for future work, the nature of their interest in the subject and their willingness to participate in particular studies.

16:00 9.a. Closing by Co-Chairs and OECD Secretariat
Annex 1. GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

Format of Discussion
Each session will open with one or more lead presentations. These should be no more than 15-20 minutes in length. This will be followed by several rounds of questions and comments by Delegates. Please limit each intervention to no more than 5 minutes in order to foster discussion.

Venue - Meeting Location
The meeting will be held at the Sharq Village and Spa Hotel in Doha, PO Box 26662, Ras Abu Abboud, Doha, Qatar.


Accommodations
The Qatari authorities have made arrangements for special rates at the Sharq Village and Spa Hotel. Special rates granted to delegates are: QAR 800 for a single room and QAR 900 for a double room.

Please contact the hotel directly to make your reservation by using the following link:
https://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/SharqVillage/Reservations - Group Code: MF1MF1A

Registration Form
All Delegates need to complete the registration form and return it to the OECD Secretariat. Entry passes can only be issued to registered Delegates and a passport or national identity card needs to be presented in order to receive an entry pass.

Entry Formalities
Delegates are advised to confirm any necessary visa requirements for entry in to Qatar. For the Delegates facing issues, Mr. Amer Abdulghafour Al-Rayahi (a.alrayahi@mof.gov.qa) will assist with the visa issuance. Please provide him with:

- A clear copy of your passport information page
- Your date and place of birth
- Your place of residence

Simultaneous Translation
Simultaneous translation between Arabic, English and French will be available throughout the meeting.