

AGENDA



MENA-OECD WORKING GROUP ON SME AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY

Enhancing SME policies for inclusive growth

9 March 2016

DUBAI MALL

Diamond Ballroom

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme and Dubai SME, an agency of the Department of Economic Development of the Government of Dubai, are organising the eight meeting of the MENA-OECD Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy.

The Working Group provides a forum for multilateral dialogue and peer learning among MENA and OECD policymakers, experts and representatives of the private sector and regional and international organisations. The discussions will identify the strategic priorities on SME and entrepreneurship policy for the extended mandate of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme (2016-2020). The specific actions to be identified are circumscribed to three essential areas:

- ♦ Improving business environments for SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- ♦ Encouraging entrepreneurship and SME development, including among youth and women, and greater SME participation in global value chains.
- ♦ Better access to finance, including by strengthening the legal and regulatory framework and increasing the availability of different sources of finance.

The conclusions of the meeting will feed into the decisions to be adopted at the MENA-OECD Ministerial Meeting which will take place during 2016.

THE MENA-OECD COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

The Competitiveness Programme offers a platform for MENA-OECD co-operation on policies to promote the development of a vibrant private sector as an engine for growth and prosperity. Building on OECD standards, tools and work methods, the Programme:

- ♦ Promotes policy dialogue and peer learning among MENA and OECD countries and engages governments, the private sector, civil society and other actors.
- ♦ Creates synergies with regional and international partners and initiatives (e.g. League of Arab States, Union for the Mediterranean, African Development Bank, Arab Monetary Fund, Deauville Partnership, UNDP, IMF, European Union, etc.).
- ♦ Supports MENA countries in the identification and implementation of reforms and paves the way for stronger involvement and partnerships of MENA countries with the OECD.

The Competitiveness Programme is part of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness, whose new mandate will cover 2016-2020.

THE PROGRAMME'S WORK ON SMEs AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Programme helps MENA countries in the identification and implementation of SME and entrepreneurship policy reforms through regional co-operation and country specific support. Its activities include regional dialogue, policy analysis and advice, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of reforms. The thematic areas covered are improving the business environment for SMEs and entrepreneurs; encouraging entrepreneurship and SME growth, effective and efficient policymaking, and better access to finance.

The Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy is co-chaired by Tunisia and Italy and provides a framework for policy dialogue and exchange of good practices. The Working Group convenes policy makers from institutions in charge of enterprise policy. The private enterprise sector is the primary beneficiary of the initiative and participates actively in the Working Group.

MENA-OECD Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy

9 March 2016

Time	Item
9.00–9.30	Registration of participants
9.30–10.00	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mr Abdul Baset Mohammed Al Janahi, Chief Executive Officer, Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment for SME Development (Dubai SME). ♦ Keynote speech by H.E. Sultan bin Saeed Al-Mansouri, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates. ♦ Welcome remarks by H.E. Ambassador Marie-Claire Swärd Capra, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Delegation of Sweden to the OECD, and Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme. ♦ Welcome remarks by Mr Carlos Conde, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.
10.00–11.15	<p>Session 1: Business environments in the MENA region: challenges, priorities and good practices</p> <p>Improving business environments is one of the priorities for the development of the private sector in the MENA region. This session will focus on MENA and OECD practices to strengthen the following aspects of the business environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Institutional and regulatory framework (e.g. regulations, rule of law, competition); ♦ Access to markets (e.g. trade and investment, public procurement, domestic demand); ♦ Access to resources (e.g. technology, knowledge, skills). <p>The discussions will consider the different weights that MENA countries give to those priorities as well as the interrelations between those areas.</p> <p>Introduction and moderation by the co-chair of the Working Group, Mr Sadok Bejja, General Director of SME promotion, Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mines, Tunisia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mr Abdelghani Mebarek, General Director for SMEs, Ministry of Industry and Mines, Algeria. ♦ Dr Maher Al-Mahrouq, Director General, Jordan Chamber of Industry. ♦ Mr Nadim Ahmad, Head of Trade and Competitiveness Statistics Division, Statistics Directorate, OECD. <p>Open discussion</p>
11.15–11.30	Coffee break
11.30–12.45	<p>Session 2: Measures to promote start-ups and SME growth as engines for employment, growth and inclusiveness</p> <p>Start-ups and high growth SMEs have a significant effect on employment, productivity and wealth creation. They also offer an opportunity for a new class of entrepreneurs, including young people and business women. Governments in the MENA region have put in place a number of schemes to promote enterprise creation and SME growth. This session will focus on discussing flagship initiatives across the region.</p> <p>Introduction and moderation by the co-chair of the Working Group, Ms. Maria Ludovica Agro, General Director, Agency for National Cohesion, Italy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Professor Salvatore Zecchini, Former Chair of the OECD Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (WPSMEE).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mrs Hana Uraidi, CEO Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO). ♦ Dr Analissa Primi, Head of the Structural Policies and Innovation Unit, OECD Development Centre. ♦ Mr Mohamed El-Biesi, Executive director of Bedaya Centre for entrepreneurship and SME development (GAFI), Egypt.
12.45–14.00	Lunch break
14.00–15.15	<p>Session 3: Better access to finance for SMEs and entrepreneurs</p> <p>SMEs in several MENA countries suffer from a structural lack of access to external finance. Bank lending, the main source of formal finance, is constrained by the relatively poor quality of the legal and regulatory environment, the limited depth of financial markets and lack of competition among banking and financial institutions. Alternative sources of finance, such as leasing, factoring, mezzanine financing or the provision of equity capital, also remain marginal. This session will focus on priorities to enhance access to finance, including by strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks and increasing the availability and reach of sources of external finance (credit guarantees, microfinance, leasing, risk capital, etc.).</p> <p>Introduction and moderation by the co-chair of the Working Group, Mr Sadok Bejja, General Director of SME promotion, Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mines, Tunisia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mr Giuseppe Gramigna, SME Expert and advisor to the MENA-OECD Working Group on SMEs. ♦ Mr Hicham Serghini, General Director, Central Guarantee Fund, Morocco. ♦ Dr Ali Awdeh, Head of Research, Union of Arab Banks. ♦ Mr Samir Bechouel, General Director of the Industrial Promotion Agency, Tunisia.
15.15–15.30	Coffee break
15.30–17.00	<p>Closing session: 2016-2020 priorities on start-up promotion and SME growth</p> <p>For over ten years the OECD and the MENA region have engaged in a mutually beneficial partnership to support reforms to modernise governance, enhance investment climates and promote stronger and more inclusive economic development. In 2015, the OECD and MENA countries decided to extend the mandate of the <i>MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development</i>. The new mandate will cover the period 2016-2020. The Working Group, as part of the wider Initiative and its Competitiveness pillar, is invited to identify the priority areas of work for the next five years, building on the discussions held throughout the day. This last session will wrap up the meeting and put forward specific areas for action to be agreed at the forthcoming MENA-OECD Ministerial Meeting, which will take place in the course of 2016.</p> <p>Introduction and moderation by Mr Antonio Fanelli, Senior Advisor, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mr. Jorge Gálvez Méndez, Economist/Policy Analyst, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD. <p>Open discussion and conclusions by the co-chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mr Sadok Bejja, General Director of SME promotion, Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mines, Tunisia. ♦ Ms. Maria Ludovica Agro, General Director, Agency for National Cohesion, Italy.