



DRAFT AGENDA

**11TH MEETING OF THE MENA-OECD  
WORKING GROUP ON SME AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY**

# **Harnessing the digital transformation for SME Productivity and Growth**

**MENA-OECD Days**

**19 June 2019**

Movenpick Hotel, Berges du Lac  
Tunis

## Objectives of the meeting

The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme is organising the eleventh meeting of the MENA-OECD Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Entrepreneurship Policy.

The meeting will:

- ♦ Discuss ways the MENA region can promote a greater use of digital technologies by SMEs and entrepreneurs to boost productivity and growth;
- ♦ Explore how particular digital technologies are used by young and women entrepreneurs and how those examples can inspire greater levels of entrepreneurship;
- ♦ Create a space for representatives from the private sector and governments to discuss innovative ideas on digitalisation, access to finance and improving the business environment for SMEs and entrepreneurs.

### **The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme**

The **MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme** was launched in 2005.

The Programme supports governments undertaking reforms to spur sector development as a driving force for growth and job creation in the region. The main tools applied are policy dialogue, peer learning, and capacity building. Priority topics addressed are trade and investment, entrepreneurship, women's economic empowerment, business integrity, corporate governance, and economic resilience.

<http://www.oecd.org/mena>

The expected outcome of the meeting is a consensus on how to better integrate digitalisation into the SME policy making agendas of the MENA region.

The meeting takes place in the context of the MENA-OECD Days in Tunis, which comprise the MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board (BAB) on 17 June and the meeting of the Steering Group of the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness on 18 June.

## About the MENA-OECD Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy

The MENA-OECD Working Group on SME Policy and Entrepreneurship is co-chaired by Tunisia and Italy. The Working Group engages partners in regional dialogue and peer learning on issues pertaining to SME growth and entrepreneurship promotion.

The MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme is grateful for the financial support of its donor, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

# MENA-OECD DAYS 2019: PARTNERING FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

Steering Group Meeting

Governance pillar

Competitiveness pillar

**MONDAY**  
17 June

**TUESDAY**  
18 June

**WEDNESDAY**  
19 June



## MENA-OECD Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy

19 June 2019

8.30–9.00	Registration of participants
9.00–9.30	<b>Welcome by the Co-chairs of the Working Group and the OECD Secretariat:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>HE Slim FERIANI</b>, Minister of Industry and SMEs, Tunisia (TBC).</li> <li>– <b>Maria Ludovica AGRO</b>, Former General Director, Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Italy.</li> <li>– <b>Carlos CONDE</b>, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</li> </ul>
9.30– 11.00	<b>Session 1: The next generation of SME policymaking: What can governments and the private sector do to help SMEs to take advantage of digital transformation?</b>

Technological progress and the digital transformation of economies and societies have important implications for small firms and entrepreneurs. These global trends provide great opportunities for innovation, increased productivity and the transformation of businesses. The OECD is at the forefront of the analysis and discussions of those trends to facilitate more coherent and comprehensive policy approaches so that digitalisation brings about a more inclusive and stronger growth.

In this session participants will address how to include those important trends as an integral part of SME and entrepreneurship policy making. That is, how to harness those developments to strengthen the enterprise tissue in MENA countries.

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Maria Ludovica AGRO</b> , Former General Director, Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Italy.
<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Molly LESHER</b>, Senior Policy Analyst and Coordinator of the OECD Going Digital Project, Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD, will present OECD work on digital transformation under the Going Digital project.</li> <li>– <b>Nawfal NEJJAR</b>, Chief of Service Networking and Collaborative Platforms, Digital Agency, Maroc PME (Morocco SME), will present the national strategy “Maroc Numérique” or Digital Morocco, in particular the approach of Maroc PME to foster the development and adoption of digital technologies by SMEs and entrepreneurs.</li> <li>– <b>Hasna HAMZAOUI</b>, Director General of Industrial Infrastructure and Technology, Ministry of Industry, Tunisia, will present Tunisia’s policies related to digitalisation and the role of SMEs in “Industry 4.0.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break
11.30–13.00	<b>Session 2: The role of technologies in promoting start-ups among young people and women in the MENA region</b>

Cloud computing, mobile phone applications, artificial intelligence, 3-D printing and other specific technologies can have an important role in helping entrepreneurs to bring innovative ideas to the market. Those technologies have important roles in cutting production costs, reducing the need of

large capital investments, allowing collaboration, fostering experimentation and reducing the time needed to bring new products and services to the market.

This session will focus on the theory and practice of how specific technologies promote entrepreneurship, especially among young people and women.

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Melika KARRIT</b> , General Director of Support to SMEs, Ministry of Industry and SMEs, Tunisia.
<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Marco BIANCHINI</b>, Economist/Policy Analyst, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD, will address the work of the Organisation to promote SME digitalisation.</li> <li>– <b>A'laa CHBARO</b>, Partner and MENA Director at impACT, will speak about her experience in the use of technology to create start-ups and to support entrepreneurship in the MENA region.</li> <li>– <b>Mattia CORBETTA</b>, Policy Advisor on Innovation and Startups, Directorate-General for Industrial Policy, Competitiveness and SMEs, Ministry of Economic Development, Italy, will discuss how public policies can help SMEs make the most of the opportunities offered by Artificial Intelligence (AI).</li> <li>– <b>Fabrizio PORRINO</b>, SVP Global Public Affairs, Facility Live will present the initiative Startup Europe-Mediterranean (SEMED) to map and establish a network between startups, investors, universities, research institutions and policymakers in the two shores of the Mediterranean.</li> </ul> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch break
14.30–17.00	<b>Idea Factory: Discussion between the public and private sector on how to strengthen policies for a better utilisation of digital technologies by SMEs and entrepreneurs</b>

An “Idea Factory” is co-organised by the OECD and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) to have a dynamic discussion between the participants of the SME Working Group and private sector representatives from the EBSOMED (Enhancing Business Support Organisations and Business Networks) project.

EBSOMED is an EU-funded project covering 10 Southern Mediterranean countries. It aims at boosting the Mediterranean business ecosystem to promote inclusive economic growth and job creation, by enhancing the business environment via strengthening the capacity building of Business Support Organisations in the Southern Neighbourhood.

The Idea Factory will consist on four break out groups of about 15 to 20 people formed by representatives of the public and private sector. Each group will address a specific topic of discussion, namely:

- Group 1: How to better harness digital and other technologies for start-ups and SME growth? How to integrate a technological dimension into national SME agendas?
- Group 2: How to support women and youth entrepreneurship through technology? What are the specific roles of the public and the private sectors?
- Groups 3 and 4: How to leverage technology to facilitate access to finance for young and female entrepreneurs?

## Agenda

14.30 – 15.00	<p><b>Part 1: Welcome to CAWTAR/EBSOMED participants and introduction to the discussion.</b></p> <p><b>Jorge Galvez Mendez</b>, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</p> <p>The CAWTAR/EBSOMED participants will join the SME Working Group in the Movenpick Hotel. The OECD Secretariat will welcome the participants and explain the dynamics of the discussions. The participants will then join the break out groups of their interest and will agree on a rapporteur who would provide a summary of the discussions at the end of the Idea Factory.</p>
15.00 – 16.00	<p><b>Part 2: Discussion in break out groups.</b></p> <p>The discussions in the break out groups will be moderated by an animator, who will provide a brief introduction to the topic and will put forward a number of questions for the participants to address. The group will also designate a rapporteur who will communicate the key messages to the rest of the group at the end of the session.</p> <p><b>Animators Group 1: Jorge Galvez Mendez and Roger Fores Carrion</b>, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</p> <p><b>Animator Group 2: Vanessa Berry-Chatelain</b>, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</p> <p><b>Animator Group 3: Slaheddine Ladjimi</b>, Board Chairman, COMAR</p> <p><b>Animator Group 4: Soukeina Bouraoui</b>, Executive Director, CAWTAR</p>
16.00 – 17.00	<p><b>Part 3: Presentation of the results of the discussion and Q&amp;A.</b></p> <p><b>Moderation and conclusions by Soukeina Bouraoui, Executive Director, CAWTAR</b></p> <p>A rapporteur or group leader from each break out group will report back on the main conclusions and ideas that participants discussed in the different groups. The messages identified will provide a picture for future priority areas for action to promote the digital transformation of SMEs and entrepreneurs in the MENA region.</p>
17.00 – 17.30	<b>Conclusions and the way forward</b>
<p>The closing session will focus on how the SME Working Group and the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme can contribute to the development of effective digital strategies for SMEs and entrepreneurship in the MENA region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Melika KARRIT</b>, General Director of Support to SMEs, Ministry of Industry and SMEs, Tunisia.</li> <li>– <b>Maria Ludovica AGRO</b>, Former General Director, Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Italy.</li> <li>– <b>Carlos CONDE</b>, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD.</li> </ul>	

## Participants

The participants of the Working Group are policy makers from key institutions in charge of enterprise policy (such as ministries of industry and the economy), SME development agencies and investment promotion agencies. Other participants include policy makers from ministries of finance, trade, labour and education; development banks; economic research centres; and international organisations. Private enterprises and the financial sector actively participate in the Working Group and are the primary beneficiaries of the initiative.

## Practical information

Arabic/English/French interpretation will be provided during the meetings.

## Contacts:

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