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♦ ABOUT US ♦

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is a strategic partnership between MENA and OECD countries to share knowledge and expertise and disseminate standards and principles of good governance.

In line with its mandate from the Deauville Partnership, the Programme supports Arab countries in transition and actively contributes to the implementation of the Partnership's Open Governance and Anti-corruption Action Plan by combining regional support with country specific projects.

It offers a unique combination of providing access to international policy instruments, capacity building and assistance to implementation, policy dialogue among peers, policy analyses and tailored recommendations. The various activities of the Programme feed into the broader objective of building trust in government and shaping a more sustainable social and economic development in the region.

This newsletter provides a snapshot of the various MENA-OECD Governance Programme activities on open and innovative governments, integrity, public financial management, territorial development, regulatory policy, public procurement and gender.

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**MENA-OECD
GOVERNANCE
PROGRAMME**

SPOTLIGHT ON REGIONAL WORK

INTEGRITY AS A CORNERSTONE OF BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

The **Working Group on Civil Service and Integrity met on 20 March 2014 in Paris** gathering more than 50 government officials, representatives of independent institutions and civil society. The meeting was jointly organised with the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) and discussed the progress achieved of MENA countries in designing codes of conduct for public officials, asset declaration systems and the role of independent institutions in implementing effective anti-corruption and open government strategies. In his opening speech, OECD Deputy Secretary General William Danvers stressed that corruption is a major obstacle to achieve progress in promoting freedom, creating jobs and realising economic and social justice. He highlighted that governments must think of integrity as one of the cornerstones of building trust in governments, which, in turn, marks a condition for ambitious and effective reforms. The meeting took place in the framework of the [OECD Integrity week](#) bringing together representatives from Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Yemen from 17-21 March 2014 in Paris.



Ambassador Ricardo Diez-Hochleitner, Co-Chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, with representatives from Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority.

A STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPLEMENT OPEN AND INNOVATIVE GOVERNMENT

Technological innovations offer the chance for governments to build more transparent and effective institutions and to include citizens in the design and delivery of public services. At the **9th annual meeting of the MENA-OECD**

Working Group on Open and Innovative Government on 9 February 2014 in Dubai, hosted by the UAE Prime Minister's Office, delegates from MENA and OECD countries evaluated the impact of implementing open and innovative policies in the MENA region and across OECD countries. The meeting served to define the scope and thematic focus of a regional comparative report and to elaborate a strategic plan for activities in 2014. The strategic plan will define how ICT can be helpful in collecting information on the specific expectations of the youth with regard to the provision of public services.



Participants at the 9th annual meeting of the WG II meeting on February 2014 in Dubai.

OECD AT UAE GOVERNMENT SUMMIT

The OECD was invited as a strategic partner to the [2nd UAE Government Summit](#) "**Leading Government Services**" on 10-12 February 2014 in Dubai.

Under the Patronage of the UAE Prime Minister, the Summit explored ways to ensure that governments are more responsive to the needs of their citizens featuring 3500 ministers and government officials from throughout the MENA region and beyond. The OECD launched the paper "*An exploratory look at public sector innovation in GCC*" and presented the OECD Comparative Study "*Rebooting Public Service Delivery – How can Open Government Data help to drive Innovation?*" for discussion.

DSG William Danvers emphasised that the quality of life and public service delivery are intertwined and thus should be addressed within a broader strategy involving citizens and business and harness the benefits of the latest technologies.

NEWS FROM THE MENA-OECD TRAINING CENTRE OF CASERTA

The Training Centre of Caserta is a joint effort of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the Italian National School of Public Administration. The Training Centre provides capacity-building activities to enhance good governance reforms with a view to harness their intrinsic value while maximizing their socio-economic impacts in key areas of the public sector, such as, procurement and access to public markets, government information and knowledge economy, regulatory policy and administrative simplification for a better business environment.

Recent activities of the Training Centre:

- Advisory Committee of the Training Centre of Caserta at ministerial level on 20-21 February 2014
- Network of Libyan open government champions was created and met on 20-23 May 2014 in Caserta

PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: TRANSPARENCY AND PRIORITISATION

The 6th annual MENA-OECD Senior Budget Officials meeting on 25-26 November 2013 in Doha highlighted the link between performance information, spending reviews and evaluation systems as a way to create fiscal space and better prioritise public spending. Hosted by the Ministry of Finance of Qatar, the MENA-SBO initiated a debate on the OECD draft *Principles on Budgetary Governance*.

PROMOTING REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS IN THE GULF REGION

A capacity building seminar for countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council on *"Building a Practical Framework for Regulatory Impact Analysis"* was organised in cooperation with the Gulf Standardisation Organisation and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Bahrain, on 20-21 January 2014 in Manama. The objective of the seminar was to build knowledge and familiarise public officials from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen with the concepts and the necessary steps of building a practical framework for Regulatory Impact Analysis.

MODERNISATION OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN MENA COUNTRIES

The MENA-OECD Network of Public Procurement Officials presented its draft

stocktaking report on the procurement systems of the six MENA Deauville Partnership countries Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen on 2-3 December 2013 in Caserta. Moreover, in partnership with the IMF-CEF, a workshop entitled *"Good Practices in Modernising Public Procurement, Part 2"* was held in April 2014 in Kuwait. Continuing the policy dialogue from the May 2013 "Part 1" workshop, the April event focused on SMEs' access to procurement, effective controls and remedy mechanisms.

SPOTLIGHT ON COUNTRY PROJECTS

TUNISIA

Building on the achievements of two previous phases of collaboration with the Tunisian government, the project *"Deepening Tunisia's integrity foundations"* kicked off in January 2014. The third phase aims at consolidating the achievements and expanding towards new topics in the areas of integrity and anti-corruption. To this effect, OECD will a) assist Tunisia in implementing the Code of Conduct for public officials, b) increase capacities for internal risk management in public institutions and public enterprises, c) support the Tunisian government in drafting a comprehensive project law on preventing corruption and d) train officials and bidders on e-procurement and procurement best practices. On 24-25 June 2014, the Code of Conduct and the OECD Joint Learning Study outlining the process of adopting the Code and reforming the asset declaration system will be launched in Tunis back-to-back to a first "train-the trainers" seminar.

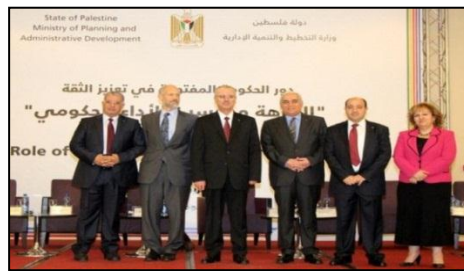
MOROCCO

Morocco's new Constitution recognises the importance of independent institutions in building public-sector integrity and engaging citizens. The OECD supports the Instance Centrale de Prévention de la Corruption (ICPC) and the Institution du Médiateur to strengthen their institutional capacity. During the seminar on *"Investigating Corruption"* on 11-12 September 2013 in Rabat, participants identified the needed capacities and emerging challenges and opportunities of the ICPC's new mandate to investigate corruption cases. The Institution du Médiateur developed a first draft strategic plan to implement its new role during a workshop on *"Strategic Planning"* on 23 March 2014 in Rabat.

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Since 2009, the OECD is engaged in a partnership with the Palestinian Authority (MENA-OECD Initiative to Support the Palestinian Authority, MIP) to assist in the

implementation of core public governance reforms to fight corruption, strengthening the rule of law and improving public service delivery. To mark the milestone in the implementation of the MIP, a high-level international conference on "The Role of Open Government in Promoting Trust" took place on 24 October 2013 in Ramallah. Opened by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and the OECD DSG William Danvers, the international conference was attended by 14 ministers from the Palestinian Authority and over 250 representatives from the public, private and NGO sector as well as from the international donor community. Peers from Denmark, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Turkey shared their experience and good practices in panel discussions on open government and trust. The Prime Minister announced the strategic objective of joining the OGP and to establish a committee to bring the PA closer to this end. The OECD has supported the PA by preparing a strategic assessment with recommendation for joining the OGP.



L-R: Minister of Justice, Ali Muhanna, OECD DSG William Danvers, Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, Minister of Planning, Mohammed Abu Ramadan, President of the GPC, Moussa Abi Zeid and Minister of Telecommunication and IT, Safa Nasser Eldin.

YEMEN

Within the framework of the Deauville Partnership MENA transition fund, the OECD supports Yemen in building judicial capacity to improve integrity, efficiency and effectiveness of the court system in cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). The 3-years project provides training for judges, prosecutors and court officers on means by which the judiciary and court system can be improved to reduce delays, increase integrity and facilitate the operation of the rule of law and facilitate the development of the institutional infrastructure in the Ministry of Justice. On 8-9 June 2014, the project steering committee will meet in Kuwait to identify the key challenges in terms of judicial capacities followed by a workshop for Yemeni stakeholders entitled *"Reinforcing the rule of law: Developing the capacities of the judiciary in Yemen"*. The meeting will be hosted by the AFESD.

MENA-OECD OPEN GOVERNMENT PROJECT

In line with the mandate of the Deauville Partnership, the OECD is assisting Jordan, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia in reviewing their institutions, policies and practices to support the implementation of Open Government principles. At the same time, the OECD is also committed to promote the international Open Government agenda, as it was confirmed during the OGP Summit of London, in November 2013, in which the OECD was declared as an OGP Multilateral Partner Organisation.



Ministers and civil society representatives from Jordan, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia with Rolf Alter, OECD Director for Public Governance and Territorial Development, at the OGP Summit in London.

Lessons learned

As a result of the first year of cooperation to support the planning and implementation of open government reforms has shown certain common challenges that all countries are facing :

Building a true partnership with citizens

Open Government policies have to be based and rooted on a true partnership between government and citizens, in which the latter are seen as equal. Adopting participative procedures from the beginning of the policy-making cycle is a challenge all OGP countries are facing. Civil society participation in consultations or conferences is not sufficient; a real difference in the modus operandi of the public sector will only be made when opportunities for participation are regularly provided to citizens, which allow them to co-produce public policies and co-deliver public services. Good emerging practices can be found in the MENA region. However, these are still sporadic and are principally a testimony of the willingness of these governments to open up to citizens' participation. To be sustainable, these efforts need to be fully and consistently integrated in the policymaking cycle and be accompanied over time with capacity building activities and dissemination exercises to provide all public officials with the right understating, skills and tools to implement them.

Ensuring leadership and coordination

Open government encompasses reforms and policies in many areas, ranging from integrity, to public financial management, e-government and access to information. These portfolios are often under the responsibility of different ministries or institutions, yet they are highly interlinked. MENA countries should not underestimate the leadership and coordination efforts needed to implement an overall open government agenda, that includes the different initiatives, creates synergies and can ensure that efforts are not duplicated but reinforce each other. Center of government coordination is a necessary input in this direction, and has to take place at different levels: clear strategies, which identify the principles and goals of government actions, implementation plans that sequence the needed interventions, define leadership schemes, assign responsibilities, set up accountability frameworks and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In this domain, the OECD has organised a **regional seminar on strategic planning on 24 March 2014 in Rabat** that gathered representatives from Libya, Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia to discuss how to draft a strategic plan to implement Open Government.

Towards an access to information culture

Throughout the region, countries are adopting or updating access to information / freedom of expression legislations, as a commitment to move away from the culture of secrecy. This process is being managed in an open and inclusive manner in all countries and citizens and CSOs are proving capable of providing valuable inputs to ameliorate the draft laws. Yet, contradictory legislations, lack of clear implementation mechanisms, and insufficient awareness among public officials and citizens alike are important challenges to ensure maximum transparency and proactive disclosure of information.

Fiscal transparency – sharing budget data with citizens

Sharing budget data, from the executive's budget to the audit report, is becoming a more and more common and accepted practice in the MENA region, also thanks to the MENA-OECD Senior Budget Official Network (MENA SBO) that has been effective in promoting a culture of policy dialogue and exchange of good practices on issues related to budget transparency. However, to create the opportunity for participation, budget information must be comprehensible to citizens. Some countries are already publishing citizens' budgets; others are still building cooperation mechanisms with citizens. These efforts need to be strengthened to harness the benefits of citizen participation in public financial processes.

Asset declaration for a new culture of transparency

Most MENA countries have legislation in place that demands senior public and elected officials to declare their assets. These are submitted to various institutions in charge of oversight, including Courts of Accounts and Anti-corruption Agencies, which often neither have the mandate nor the capacity to verify or investigate the declarations. For asset declarations to become a real tool to fight corruption and prevent conflicts of interest, a reform of the system is needed aimed at providing oversight authorities the right instruments and capacity to perform their tasks. In the long run, public disclosures of the declarations are however desirable to take advantage of citizens ability to verify and uncover corruption cases. An important cultural change is needed to move to a society of openness.

Capacity Building at National Level

Jordan

In the process of drafting its second OGP Action Plan, Jordan has expressed the need to improve public service delivery at the local level better identifying and prioritizing the most pressing needs of citizens and the private sector. The seminar "**Assessment of Open Government Policies on Local Development in Jordan**", held on **27 May 2014 in Amman**, was the third of a series of capacity building events aimed to disseminate practical frameworks for implementing Open Government practices at the local level. It was accompanied by a field mission to the municipalities of Ajloun and Zarqa to assess local open government practices.

Libya

The OECD, in cooperation with UNDP Libya, is supporting Libya in its state-building efforts by providing assistance to draft and implement open government reforms in line with international standards and practices. Identified thanks to a first Open Government assessment mission, that took place in June, a **network of Libyan open government champions was created and met on 20-23 May 2014 in Caserta** to gain a deeper understanding of how transparency, accountability, open government and ICTs instruments can be integrated for a more effective functioning of government institutions. The seminar was also an occasion to update the information gathered during the Assessment mission and that will result in an Open Government Report to be published in the last quarter of 2014.

Morocco

The OECD presented the "**Open Government Review Morocco**" in the seminar on "**Implementing Open Government Policies in Morocco**" on **8 April 2014 in Rabat**. The

review provides an assessment of open government principles in the public sector and tailored recommendations in the area of citizen participation, budget transparency, integrity and the use of ICT. The seminar was also a first occasion for stakeholders from both the public sector and civil society to meet and discuss, together with a peer expert from Brazil, the importance of better integrating citizens' feedbacks in the latest draft of the Access to information Law and approve it as soon as possible in order to qualify to join the OGP and start collaborating on Morocco's OGP Action Plan.

Tunisia

Thanks to the decision of publishing the Executive's Budget Proposal online and its first ever Citizen Budget in December 2013, Tunisia qualified to become the second MENA country to join the OGP, on 14 January 2014, the symbolic date of the 3rd anniversary of the revolution. Based on a peer review mission to evaluate the implementation of open government against OECD good practices, which took place from 15 to 18 April 2013, the OECD drafted the "*Open Government Review of Tunisia*". Its **main findings were presented to the Steering Group members on 6 March 2014 in Tunis** and will provide guidance in drafting the country's first OGP action plan. The back-to-back seminar on citizens' engagement paved the way for Tunisia's OGP consultation process, which will continue to be assisted by the OECD with both capacity building and policy advice.

Open Government at Local Level

Local governments have a key role in implementing Open Government (OG). Local authorities are at the forefront of the State. Their performance shapes people's perception about the quality of the government, as a whole. Their proximity with people and with their needs spurs citizen scrutiny, engagement and participation. Their capacity to pool information about opportunities and challenges facing their community put them in a pivotal role to support business and promote inclusive and sustainable economic development. For all these reasons, the OECD has launched an ad hoc assessment of the functioning of Open Government policies in local communities within countries participating in the MENA-OECD Open Government Project. Tunisia and Jordan have already been produced and Morocco will be assessed in the forthcoming weeks. On-field missions have provided valuable insights about the way open government can be promoted at local level, while they have also been a way to raise awareness and disseminate information to local and national authorities, in particular, good practices and tailored policy advice on how to design and implement open government reforms.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

OECD Review of Regulatory Reform in the Middle East and North Africa - Implementing Regulatory Policy Principles to Foster Inclusive Growth (available in [English](#), [French](#) and Arabic, 2013)

OECD Integrity Review of Tunisia – The Public Sector Framework ([English](#) and [French](#), 2013)

Renforcer l'intégrité en Tunisie: L'élaboration de normes pour les agents publics et le renforcement du système de déclaration de patrimoine (Preliminary version in French, 2013)

Analyse du Système de Contrôle, d'Audit et de Maîtrise des Risques dans le Secteur Public Tunisien (Preliminary Version in French, 2013)

Consolider la transparence budgétaire pour une meilleure gouvernance publique en Tunisie (French, English and Arabic, 2013)

Effective integrity in practice: Designing and implementing the code of conduct of the Palestinian Administration (English, 2013)

Palestinian Authority – E-Government Policy Document (English, 2013)

Palestinian Authority – E-Government Implementation Roadmap (English, 2013)

MENA-OECD Network on Public Procurement – Stocktaking Report (Preliminary version in English, 2013)

UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Open Government Review Morocco

Open Government Review Tunisia

Preliminary Assessment of Open Government Practices in Libya

Open Government for Local Development in Jordan

Renforcer L'Intégrité en Tunisie: L'Élaboration de Normes pour les Agents Publics et le Renforcement du Système de Déclaration de Patrimoine (Final version)

OECD-CAWTAR Report on Gender, Law and Public Policies: Trends in the Middle East and North Africa

Comparative Study of E-Government Systems in the MENA Region

Stocktaking Report on MENA Public Procurement Systems

Addressing the Youth - Discussion Paper