



MENA-OECD  
Competitiveness Programme

# Programme of Work 2019/2020





## **Paving the way towards 2019/2020**

The aim of this note is to present the planned activities by the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme in 2019 and 2020. It follows the strategic orientations recommended by the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in October 2016. This note was presented at the Advisory Board of the Competitiveness Programme in April 2019 and will support the discussions of the Steering Group in Tunis in June 2019.

In 2019 and 2020, the Programme will engage in further policy discussion in support of inclusive growth and competitiveness through the regional working groups and fora. It will deliver analytical material to facilitate informed decisions about policy reforms and continue the process of capacity building and peer advice through a large number of projects and activities. The Programme will also respond to the demand of the region organising specific activities in the area of infrastructure development and upgrade of statistical capacities. By the end of 2020, the Programme will reach the end of the current mandate. It will have significantly delivered on the implementation of the 2016 Tunis Declaration and will have reinforced efforts to ensure results and impact. In view of its extension, and through high-level meetings with the involvement of ministers from the region, the Programme will assess the challenges and opportunities of the region beyond 2020 and how policies must shape and accompany the efforts of the MENA region to achieve more competitive economies and prosperous societies.

The Programme will be guided by enhanced inclusiveness, associating civil society, private sector and unions to the traditional constituency of government officials. The Programme will guarantee an appropriate gender balance in all activities and ensure mainstreaming of gender concerns and considerations in all policy reform debates and recommendations.

## Outcome 1: Improved understanding of linkages between policy dimensions by MENA governments and increased ownership of the Initiative

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA-OECD activities
<p><b>Advisory Board and Steering Group</b></p>	<p>In 2019/2020, under the guidance and leadership of the Tunisian Chairmanship, the AB and the SG will inform on key developments of the Programme since the Steering Groups of November 2018, highlighting the main achievements and challenges with the objective of supporting the implementation of the Tunis Declaration. Ministers will be consulted to provide orientations and pave the way for a MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference in 2020.</p> <p>In this period, the SG will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess the implementation of the Programme’s enhanced monitoring mechanism, approved in 2018, and it will provide guidance on its potential adjustments.</li> <li>• analyse how emerging topics have been addressed, including quality infrastructure and statistics.</li> <li>• supervise all the analytical and substantive material submitted the Working Groups and Networks, seeking to guarantee its alignment with the overall Programme’s strategy and ensuring coherence and policy synergy within and outside the Programme by providing strategic guidance.</li> <li>• provide guidance in the policy orientations to promote inclusive growth and enhanced competitiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB Meeting: 16 April 2019.</li> <li>• SG Meeting: 18 June 2019.</li> <li>• MENA-OECD Days including High-level Government-Business Summit: 17-19 June 2019.</li> <li>• MENA-OECD Advisory Board: February 2020</li> <li>• Consultations: February – June 2020</li> <li>• MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference: End 2020</li> </ul>	<p>The strategic discussions and key findings under the different activities of the Programme will be regularly reported to the <b>OECD External Relations Committee</b> and other thematic Committees.</p> <p>The External Relations Committee has renewed the <b>Morocco Country Programme</b> for 3 years in March 2019. Since 2015, the Country Programme has ensured cross-fertilisation and mutual learning with the Programme, including in the areas of anti-corruption, statistics, or trade and investment.</p> <p>The OECD Council has extended an invitation to <b>Egypt</b> to launch a Country Programme, which is expected to begin in 2020 and will be closely coordinated with the MENA-OECD Initiative.</p>

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<p><b>Emerging issues and horizontal items</b></p>	<p>Following the conclusions of the SG meeting in November 2018, the Programme has addressed emerging priorities for the region. In particular, two regional conferences were organised addressing policies to improve statistics in support of competitiveness policies and study investment mechanisms to develop quality infrastructure.</p> <p>The Programme will engage in the area of digitalisation and support the OECD Going Digital Project. The 2019 Steering Group Meeting will include a session on “Bridging the digital divide”, which could pave the way for further work in the area of digital economy, addressing issues related to jobs and skills, entrepreneurship, or inclusive access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional conference on enhancing statistics and statistical services in the MENA region through the Programme on 15 April 2019 in Paris.</li> <li>• High-level conference on infrastructure quality investment on 19-20 March 2019 in Egypt.</li> <li>• EU-OECD Project “Supporting the development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone”.</li> </ul>	<p>Statistical work is being implemented in collaboration with the OECD Statistics Directorate and Paris21.</p> <p>The work to support high quality infrastructure investment was conducted in alignment with the OECD support to the G20 Work on Quality Infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Strategic cooperation with regional organisations</b></p>	<p>The OECD will continue to engage closely with regional organisations responsible for driving change, such as the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which in 2019-2020 will launch two joint projects with the Programme, and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) amongst others.</p> <p>The Programme continues the collaboration with the G7 Deauville Partnership in the final round of funds disbursement. The Programme will also co-ordinate its work with the G20 Compact for Africa, concerning its work across North Africa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMF: implement projects under the MoU signed in 2018.</li> <li>• UfM: implement projects under the MoU signed in 2018.</li> <li>• UfM: establish a framework and develop a report measuring regional integration across the UfM and its sub-regions.</li> <li>• UfM: launch a study on forced displacement threats and dynamics in the UfM neighboring regions (TBC)</li> <li>• Explore new venues of collaboration with other regional actors.</li> </ul>	<p>Activities will be co-ordinated with relevant OECD Directorates including CFE, DAF, DCD, SDD and GOV.</p>

## Outcome 2: Increased instruments for stakeholders to promote women's economic empowerment and raised awareness about legal constraints

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA-OECD activities
<p><b>Women Economic Empowerment Forum (WEEF)</b></p>	<p>The WEEF will continue advocating for legal, institutional and policy reforms in support of gender equality and non-discrimination to enhance women's participation at all levels of the economy. The WEEF will work at regional level and continue the national consultations and advisory missions to promote reforms.</p> <p>The priorities will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support and measure the dissemination of good practices on legal reforms and enforcement to fight legal discrimination against women.</li> <li>• To advance in the implementation of statistical strategies for gender disaggregated data.</li> <li>• To ensure mainstreaming of gender considerations across the MENA Competitiveness programme, and in particular support the framework conditions to promote women's employment and entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual WEEF meetings: in 2019 in Stockholm (November); in 2020 (TBC).</li> <li>• Finalisation and launch of the publication on recent legal and policy reforms in support of women's economic empowerment.</li> <li>• Finalisation of paper on data collection in support of WEE, dissemination and support to implementation.</li> <li>• National consultation on women economic empowerment in Egypt (10 sept 2019).</li> <li>• One audio-visual initiative to promote and stimulate the access of young girls to STEM fields.</li> <li>• Organization of side-event at 63<sup>rd</sup> UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) on WEE in MENA (11 – 22 March 2019).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal OECD gender activities, including by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, the Development Cluster, and the OECD overall gender work.</li> <li>• Gender-related work of the Country-Programme Morocco.</li> <li>• Enhanced collaboration with regional and international organisations such as CAWTAR, League of Arab States, Union for the Mediterranean and UN Agencies.</li> <li>• Collaboration on the SME Development Strategy for Libya Transition Fund project, to strengthen the role and capacities of associations of women in business in Libya's private sector development</li> </ul>

**Outcome 3: Better understanding of linkages between trade and investment to promote integration at all levels (global, regional and sub-national) and acquisition of OECD tools and instruments to support sound policies.**

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA-OECD activities
<p><b>Working Group on Investment and Trade (WG1)</b></p>	<p>The WG will further analyse and provide evidence of the trade and investment nexus in the MENA region. The WG will continue reviewing trends in investment and trade and assess policies. It will identify lessons that can be learned from past and ongoing reforms, building on the past work. The WG will also enhance discussion on global and regional value chains, based on OECD trade and investment statistical tools and instruments with which incumbents have been exposed in 2017 and 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WG will better include the perspective of the private sector in the identification of barriers and obstacles to trade and investment (building on the BAB).</li> <li>• Specific focus will be given to gender equality in trade and investment policies building on the initial analytical work produced in 2018.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual meetings: November 2019 (Rabat), 2020 (TBC).</li> <li>• Drafting of a paper on investment and trade, with a focus on (i) investment and trade recent trends and reforms, (ii) integration into global and regional value chains, and (iii) gender equality in investment and trade with regional recommendations based on the work initiated in 2018. The report will pave the way towards a road map for reforms and their implementation, encompassing the contribution of other partners (international and regional organisations and non-governmental actors).</li> <li>• Regional seminars (4/year) and national workshops (notably for Algeria and Palestinian Authority) under the EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean</li> <li>• Participation of MENA policy-makers in OECD investment-related activities, including the OECD Investment Committee and capacity-building seminars.</li> <li>• Contribution to the implementation of the EU-OECD Project on Supporting the development of Suez Canal Economic Zone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean.</li> <li>• MENA Transition Fund project on Enhancing the Investment Climate in Egypt.</li> <li>• Investment-related work of the Country-Programme Morocco.</li> <li>• OECD work on trade and investment statistics and indicators.</li> </ul>

**Outcome 4: Better knowledge about good international practices and policy tools to support SMEs and increased engagement of the private sector and women**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Strategic objectives for 2019/2020</b>	<b>Activities in 2019/2020</b>	<b>Complementarities with other MENA-OECD activities</b>
<p><b>Working Group on SMEs (WG2)</b></p>	<p>The WG2 will continue addressing the four strategic areas identified for 2016-2020: Effective policymaking; better business environments; access to finance; and entrepreneurship and SME growth. In 2019-2020 the WG2 will focus in particular on how to integrate digital transformation aspects and technologies into its activities, including the promotion of digital technologies for entrepreneurship among women and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual meetings: 19 June 2019 as part of the MENA-OECD Days in Tunis, 2020 (TBC).</li> <li>• Two regional training courses on Policies for Competitiveness in MENA, which focus on key socioeconomic challenges for the region and private sector development policies to address those challenges (in collaboration with the IMF Centre in Kuwait).</li> <li>• Two regional training courses on SME and Entrepreneurship Policies (in collaboration with the IMF Centre in Kuwait).</li> <li>• Drafting an SME report covering the specific aspects identified in 2018.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MENA Transition Fund Project “SME Development Strategy in Libya.”</li> <li>• Activities of the WEEF, BAB and ERTF.</li> <li>• Synergies with CFE on women entrepreneurship.</li> <li>• Workshop on investment and SME linkages in the Palestinian Authority.</li> </ul>



## Outcome 5: Increased use of international standards on corporate governance

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA- OECD activities
<p><b>Working Group on Corporate Governance (WG3)</b></p>	<p>The WG 3 will continue to support the development of sound corporate governance frameworks to boost competitiveness, private sector development, and attract capital in the MENA region.</p> <p>In line with the three-year objectives of the WG, identification of key challenges in 2017, development of policy options in 2018; and strategies for implementation in 2019, the WG is focused on four thematic areas in 2019: (1) transparency and disclosure of listed companies; (2) access to corporate finance and capital markets; (3) gender balance in corporate leadership, and; (4) state-owned enterprises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual meetings: 16-17 April 2019 in Paris, 2020 (TBC);</li> <li>• Launch of the report ‘Corporate Governance in MENA: Building a Framework for Competitiveness and Growth’ and discussion of implementation strategies. This report builds upon and bring together the four reports developed in 2018 on (1) improving transparency and disclosure of listed companies; (2) access to long-term financing and capital markets; (3) achieving gender balance in corporate leadership, and; (4) state ownership of SOEs. The report provided the basis for the discussion on strategies for policy implementation.</li> <li>• Participation of selected MENA representatives in OECD Corporate Governance related activities, including the OECD Corporate Governance Committee.</li> <li>• Seminars to disseminate and build on the Report findings in Oman, December 2019 (TBC) and Lebanon in 2019 or 2020 (TBC).</li> <li>• Targeted national support on board diversity, corporate governance of SOEs, use of technology by supervisory authorities, and mechanisms to manage related party transactions, 2020 (TBC).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in all the annual meetings of the Competitiveness Programme WGs.</li> <li>• Participation in the OECD’s wider work on SOEs and gender diversity. The Working Group research will contribute to the representation of MENA economies in the OECD’s work on these subjects.</li> </ul>

## Outcome 6: Strengthened dialogue between governments, private sector and trade unions and improved capacities of private sector associations

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA- OECD activities
<p><b>MENA-OECD Business Advisory Board (BAB)</b></p>	<p>The objective of the BAB for 2019/2020 will be to increase its membership and consolidate its operating mechanisms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BAB will consolidate the focus groups created to channel the views of the private sector to the other working groups of the Competitiveness Programme.</li> <li>• Specific importance will be given to the youth, since it is a priority group of the population who can have a strong impact in terms of job creation through entrepreneurship, but which needs to be better included in policy advocacy.</li> <li>• The Competitiveness Programme will leverage the BAB network to promote public-private dialogue and to support private sector organisations through capacity-building and peer-learning activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual meetings: 17 June 2019 in Tunis as part of the MENA-OECD Days; 2020 tbc. Joint organisation of a panel during the MENA-OECD Days with BusinessMed and CAWTAR.</li> <li>• Expansion of analytical work conducted in 2018 on the mapping of business organisations, to develop case studies on specific PPD initiatives and other topics identified through the focus groups. Also, produce analytical outputs linking the role of the private sector within the themes of the Competitiveness Programme, for example, the role of business organisations in fragile countries.</li> <li>• Creation of a Youth Business Platform under the BAB: The BAB will officially launch a specific platform to gather youth business organisations. It will also have two co-chairs, and following the structure of the parent group, they will be the main youth business organisations of Tunisia and Spain: Centre des Jeunes Dirigeants d'entreprise de Tunisie (CJD Tunisie) and the Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Jóvenes Empresarios (CEAJE).</li> <li>• Consolidation of focus groups for each of the Competitiveness Programme working groups (investment and trade; SMEs and entrepreneurship; corporate governance; women economic empowerment; economic resilience; business integrity) to articulate the representation of the private sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BAB will participate in all the annual meetings of the Competitiveness Programme WGs, and focus groups will prepare short position notes to present the views of the private sector on the topics discussed.</li> <li>• The BAB will also be connected to the Business for Inclusive Growth initiative, a similar platform, which brings together companies but at a global level. It will also look to collaborate with different platforms such as the B20, Businessmed or others.</li> <li>• National projects to provide technical assistance e.g., with the Economic and Social Council of Lebanon.</li> </ul>

**Outcome 7: Consolidated platform to extend the use of recognised international integrity norms, standards and best practices among the private sector**

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA- OECD activities
<p><b>MENA-OECD Business Integrity Network (MOBIN)</b></p>	<p>Following the annual meeting of March 2019, the MOBIN will complete the analysis of on-going practices as well as gaps and needs in public-private dialogue on anti-corruption in MENA countries, with the view to help identify directions of the MOBIN to be supportive of enabling change and promote business integrity in the region.</p> <p>The MOBIN will also deepen the understanding of the nexus between anti-money laundering and anti-corruption and support stronger institutional coordination and alliances between the public and private sectors to fight against corruption more effectively.</p> <p>Aligned to the Programme’s gender mainstreaming objective, and building on the discussions held on gender and integrity at the 2019 MOBIN meeting, the work will further reflect about the need and ways to implement gender-sensitive anti-corruption policies to achieve better policy outcomes.</p> <p>Furthermore, the MOBIN will continue to further the dialogue with a selected number of MENA countries on the benefits of adhering to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Relations and support them in getting closer to the implementing body of the latter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training course at the Kuwait IMF’s Centre for Economics and Finance (January 2020 -tbc).</li> <li>• Annual meetings: March 2019, as part of the OECD Integrity week.</li> <li>• Finalisation of the report of ongoing practices and gaps in the MENA region in the public private dialogue to fight corruption.</li> <li>• Publication of the Manual on collective actions against corruption.</li> <li>• Capacity-building seminar on integrity and anti-corruption to support the Economic and Social Council of Lebanon (10-11 July, Beirut)</li> <li>• Regional seminar on investment and integrity with the framework of the EU-OECD Programme on Promoting Investment in the Mediterranean.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OECD work on the implementation of the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Relations.</li> <li>• B20 anti-corruption work led by the OECD.</li> <li>• Joint activities and collaboration with the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.</li> <li>• Development of partnerships with other international or regional actors supportive of the fight against corruption in the region.</li> <li>• Morocco Country Programme: co-operation towards the adherence of Morocco adherence to the Anti-Bribery Convention</li> </ul>

**Outcome 8: Accelerated peer learning between target governments, coordination with international organisations and engagement of the private sector to respond to economic needs driven by conflict/fragility**

Outputs	Strategic objectives for 2019/2020	Activities in 2019/2020	Complementarities with other MENA- OECD activities
<p><b>Economic Resilience Task Force</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Programme will continue the work of the now consolidated Economic Resilience Task Force, which provides a regional platform to address issues identified by the countries related economic resilience in a context of conflict and fragility.</li> <li>• The task force will connect with other international initiatives in order to disseminate the findings and conclusions of its members.</li> <li>• One of the objectives for 2019/2020 is to build on the methodology developed in 2018 for country level analysis to complement regional discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual regional meetings: December 2019 (Berlin), 2020 (TBC). The topics for the annual event will be agreed with the chairs and will build on the discussions held during the 2018 annual meeting. It is expected that part of the focus will be to add new country case studies to apply the conceptual framework that is currently being developed.</li> <li>• Expand analytical work based on the new framework for country case studies and topics identified as a priority in the 2018 annual meeting. A report will be prepared analysing policies to support SMEs, attract FDI, and leverage the private sector in fragile contexts. An additional case study will be developed looking at initiatives to empower women that are refugees in Jordan.</li> <li>• Participation of OECD experts in international fora on economic resilience in MENA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MENA Transition Fund Project “SME Development Strategy in Libya”.</li> <li>• Coordination with International Network on Conflict and Fragility and other international initiatives.</li> </ul>

## Enhancing collaboration with the MENA-OECD Governance Programme

- Joint event on MENA at the OECD Integrity Week in March 2019
- Update the concept note “Women’s economic and political empowerment in the MENA region: linkages between good governance, protection and access to economic rights and justice”
- Joint Advisory Board for the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development (February 2019)
- Joint Steering Group for the MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development (April 2019)
- Joint reporting to the OECD External Relations Committee
- Potential joint activities between the Working Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Policy and the MENA-OECD Working Group on Regulatory Reform and Rule of Law as well as the MENA-OECD network on public procurement
- Cross-fertilisation on the work related to fragile countries including co-ordination for the annual meeting on the Economic Resilience Task Force
- Joint high-level policy dialogue missions to the region
- Joint donor co-ordination and outreach





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