



OECD Citizens' Voice Phase III project REGIONAL CONFERENCE

*Empowering Civil Society and the Media to Enhance Open
Government*

Hybrid meeting: online and in Beirut, Lebanon, Smallville Hotel

Monday 28 November 2022

9.30 am – 12.00 pm Beirut time



Federal Republic of Germany
Foreign Office



OECD

BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Objectives

Supported by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, and in the context of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, this event is organised in the framework of the project “**Citizens’ Voice: Empowering Civil Society Organisations and the Media to Enhance Open Government**” focusing on Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority. The event aims to foster a policy dialogue among actors from civil society, media and youth organisations in the three countries particularly, and other MENA countries more broadly, to discuss the needed reforms, and related challenges and opportunities to help create, strengthen and preserve spaces that facilitate the participation of civil society and media in public life and promote dialogue between these actors and the government. The conference will be an opportunity to share findings from the draft assessments conducted as part of the project in Lebanon and Jordan. It will also present the results of engagement and capacity building activities conducted so far in the 3 countries, and exchange practices focusing on media literacy as an effort to combat mis- and disinformation and on innovative citizen engagement initiatives such as deliberative exercises.

Logistics

The meeting will be held on **Monday 28 November 2022** in Beirut, Lebanon and online. Interpretation in English and Arabic will be provided. Please use the following zoom connection details on the day of the event: <https://meetoe.cd1.zoom.us/j/9450123456789>

Agenda

Monday 28 November 2022

9.00 – 09.30 Registration and welcome coffee

Opening Remarks

09.30 – 09.45

- Salilah El-Khodary, Cultural and Press Affairs, Stabilization and Human Rights, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Lebanon
- Alessandro Bellantoni, Head of the open government, civic space and public communication unit, open and innovative government division, Public Governance Directorate, OECD

Session 1. Overview of initial findings from the Lebanon and Jordan assessments conducted as part of the project

09.45 – 10.45

Lebanon assessment:

- Karine Badr, policy analyst, OECD
- Andre Sleiman, Country Representative, Democracy Reporting International, Lebanon

Jordan assessment:

- Emilie Cazenave, policy analyst, OECD
- Mahmoud Al Sbaihat, We Participate, Jordan

This session will present the initial findings of an assessment conducted in Lebanon, on the feasibility of representative deliberative democracy exercises in the country, as a means of innovatively engaging with citizens, and in Jordan, on key benefits of government-CSO partnerships in the country, prerequisites for the success of such engagements and the challenges they face.

10.45 – 11.00 **Coffee break**

Session 2. A conversation on media reform and media literacy in the MENA region: shared challenges and ways forward

Moderation: Dr. Aida El Kaisy, media development expert

- Rami Eleimat, Projects Manager, Jordan Media Institute
- Hussein Sherif, researcher and journalist at Maharat Foundation
- Basem Sbeih, Executive Director, Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists
- Round table discussion

11.00 – 12.00

There are a number of cross-cutting challenges to media reform initiatives which put enhanced citizen engagement at their heart. This session will engage in a discussion with key actors from the region about these challenges, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of different approaches of media literacy. The session will highlight key achievements and lessons learned as part of this project as well as consider next steps for media reform actors to take forward.

Closing remarks

12.00 – 12.05

- Karine Badr, policy analyst, open government, civic space and public communication unit, open and innovative government division, Public Governance Directorate, OECD
-

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international body that promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. It is composed of 38 member countries, a secretariat in Paris, and committees, drawn from experts from government and other fields, for each work area covered by the organisation. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. It collaborates with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. The organisation also analyses and compares data to predict future trends.

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme

The [MENA-OECD Governance Programme](#) is a strategic partnership between MENA and OECD countries to share knowledge and expertise, with a view of disseminating standards and principles of good governance that support the ongoing process of reform in the MENA region. The Programme strengthens collaboration with the most relevant multilateral initiatives currently underway in the region.

The Programme acts as a leading advocate of managing ongoing public governance reforms in the MENA region. The Programme provides a sustainable structure for regional policy dialogue as well as for country specific projects. These projects correspond to the commitment of MENA governments to implement public sector reforms in view of unlocking social and economic development and of meeting citizens' growing expectations in terms of quality services, inclusive policy making and transparency.

The [Training Centre of Caserta](#), hosted by the Italian National School of Administration (SNA), supports the Programme in developing and conducting capacity-building activities aimed at MENA public officials in order to pursue efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector and good governance.

The OECD Open Government Unit

The [OECD Open Government unit](#) supports countries in their efforts to build more transparent, accountable and participatory governments that can restore citizens' trust and promote inclusive growth. Through data collection, capacity building and the promotion of regional peer dialogue, the OECD provides in-depth analyses of open government strategies and initiatives, coupled with policy advice and actionable recommendations. The unit's work is based on the [OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government](#), the first international legal instrument on the topic, which defines the main tenets of the governance of open government strategies and initiatives and paving the way forward for this agenda across OECD members and partners.

PHASE III: CITIZENS' VOICE PROJECT (2021 – 2023)

Supported by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, the project "***Citizens' Voice III: Empowering Civil Society and the Media to Enhance Open Government in Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority (2021-2023)***" seeks to help create, strengthen and preserve spaces that facilitate the participation of civil society and media in public life and promote dialogue between these actors and the government in all three countries. As part of this initiative, the OECD develops analyses and assessments of existing contexts and challenges and provides recommendations on how to protect and promote a healthy and well-functioning media and information ecosystem. It also supports engagement, capacity-building and networking activities for civil society and media stakeholders to exchange practices in this field and strengthen their capacities through a series of conferences and workshops. This project builds on the OECD's previous work in the framework of Phase I (2016-2018) and II (2019-2021) of the [citizens' voice project](#) supporting government communicators.

CONTACT

Karine Badr | Karine.BADR@oecd.org

Emilie Cazenave | emilie.cazenave@oecd.org

Follow us on Twitter [@OECDgov](https://twitter.com/OECDgov)

[#OECDgov](https://twitter.com/OECDgov) [#Coms4OG](https://twitter.com/OECDgov)