Harnessing the power of AI and technology for enhanced public service responsiveness in MENA
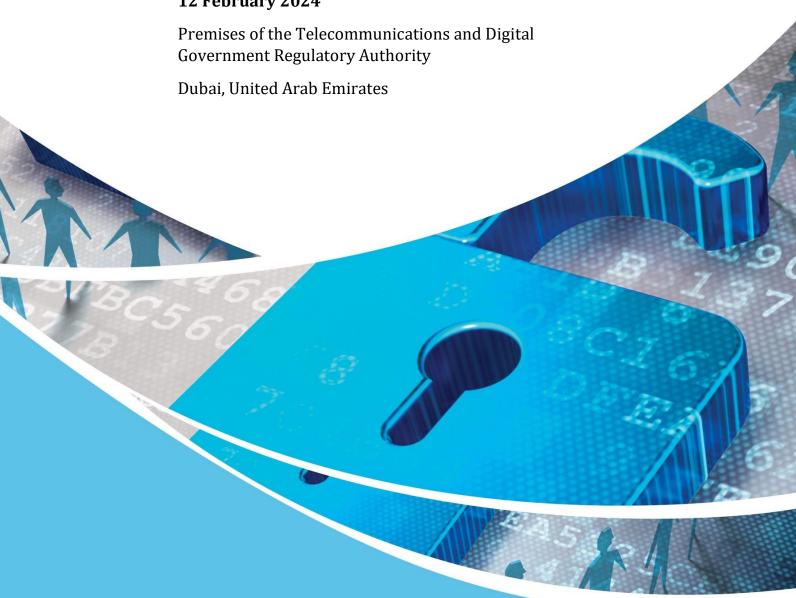
12 February 2024

Premises of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

MENA - OECD
Governance Programme

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Overview and objectives of the meeting

The purpose of the event is to host a discussion of the **MENA-OECD Working Group II on Open and Innovative Government** and continue building on its previous discussions, concentrating on the synergies that governments can identify in being more **open, digital and innovative** and how this approach can contribute to promoting greater **citizen and stakeholder participation** in the MENA region. Organised as a side-event of the **World Governments Summit 2024**, the meeting will support and complement the Summit's priority themes surrounding government acceleration and transformation and artificial intelligence. The Working Group will contribute to the Plenary discussion of the World Governments Summit by presenting the outcomes of the meeting.

The meeting will draw on the dialogue of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the OECD Public Governance Committee and builds on the Recommendation of the OECD Council on Digital Government Strategies as well as the Recommendation of the OECD Council on Open Government.

Monday, 12 February 2024

10:00 – 10:20	**Opening Remarks**
	• **Mr. Mohammed Al Khamis**, Director of Development Department, Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, United Arab Emirates • Co-Chair of the OECD-MENA Working Group II on Open and Innovative Government, Korea *and/or* Portugal (TBC) • **Carlos Santiso**, Head of Innovative, Digital and Open Governance Division (INDIGO), OECD
10 :20 – 11 :20	**Session 1. Leveraging the use of AI in the public sector for more human-centric and responsive public services**
	Over the past decade, MENA and OECD countries have embarked on a journey to unlock the vast potential of AI within the public sector. With substantial investments, governments have explored ways to enhance the efficiency of internal operations and revolutionise the development and delivery of public policies and services. The importance of the principle of duty of care, which emphasises the responsibility to deploy AI in a manner that prevents harm and prioritises the well-being of individuals and communities, is prompting a careful approach to AI design, implementation, and oversight in the public sector to mitigate biases, discrimination, and negative impacts. In this context, setting the right enablers (e.g. governance structures, technical and human capabilities) and guardrails (e.g. algorithmic accountability and transparency instruments) is essential to fulfil this duty. In this session, participants will explore the delicate balance between leveraging the benefits of AI and mitigating the risks to foster more responsive public service delivery. **Moderator** • **Alessandro Bozzini**, Policy Analyst, Open Governance Unit, Innovative, Digital and Open Governance Division (INDIGO), OECD **Speakers** • **Marco Daglio,** Head of Observatory for Public Sector Innovation, Innovative, Digital and Open Governance Division, OECD • (TBC) **Roundtable discussion**
11:20 – 11:45	Coffee break
11:45 – 13:00	**Breakout groups** Participants will be allocated to one of three breakout groups discussing a specific dimension of AI use in the public sector:

	A. Governance and levels of engagement. Where key actors need to be involved to implement actions targeting specific challenges. *Facilitated by Alessandro Bozzini, Policy Analyst, INDIGO, OECD*
	B. Enablers. Areas where policy actions can be prioritised to establish a solid enabling environment and unlock the full-scale adoption of AI in the public sector. *Facilitated by Seong Ju Park, Policy Analyst, INDIGO, OECD*
	C. Guardrails. Options for policy levers governments can consider to secure a trustworthy and responsible use, such as transparency and accountability frameworks. *Facilitated by María Pascual, Policy Analyst, INDIGO, OECD*
	Reporting back to plenary Following the breakout sessions, each group will choose a representative who will report back to the plenary on their discussions and on what input(s) they would propose for the outcomes document on the question discussed. Agreed inputs will be recorded in writing in real time by the OECD Secretariat.
13:00 - 14:00	**Lunch break**
14:00 - 15:30	**Session 2. Measuring progress towards digital government**
	The OECD Digital Government Index (DGI) is a cornerstone of the OECD work on digital government and public sector data. Built on the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies and the OECD Digital Government Policy Framework (DGPF), the DGI assesses the efforts made by governments to establish the enabling foundations for a digital transformation of the public sector that is coherent and human-centred. The DGI examines governments' strategic approaches, policy levers, implementation and monitoring efforts in the six dimensions of the DGPF: *Digital by design, Data-driven, Government as a platform, Open by default, User-driven* and *Proactiveness*. This session will introduce the DGI and share the key findings of the 2023 edition. Egypt, the first MENA country participating in the DGI, will also share their experience. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their readiness for measuring the digital government maturity and how the DGI can be a useful tool in their digital transformation efforts. **Moderator** • **Seong Ju Park,** Policy Analyst, Digital Government and Data Unit, Innovative, Digital and Open Governance Division (INDIGO), OECD **Speakers** • **H.E. Eng. Ghada Labib**, Vice-Minister for Institutional Development, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Egypt **Open discussion**

	Use of digital interactive whiteboard (e.g. Google Jamboard and other tools) to brainstorm additions to the outcomes document concerning the measurement of digital government. Additions to the document will be included in real time by the OECD Secretariat.
15:30 - 16:00	**Closing Remarks: presenting the Working Group II outcome document and next steps**
	• **Mr. Mohammed Al Khamis**, Director of Development Department, Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, United Arab Emirates • **H.E. Ambassador Luca Sabbatucci**, Chair of the OECD-MENA Governance Programme and Permanent Representative to the OECD, Italy • **Carlos Santiso**, Head of Innovative, Digital and Open Governance Division (INDIGO), OECD

MENA-OECD Working Group II on Open and Innovative Government

The OECD has undertaken a range of capacity-building exercises at the national, regional, and local levels and has consolidated three regional networks in the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. These networks offer countries from each respective region a platform to exchange ideas, experiences, and knowledge on building stronger public institutions with a focus on open government, public sector innovation, and digital government.

The MENA-OECD Working Group II on Open and Innovative Government was launched in 2005 and is currently chaired by United Arab Emirates and co-chaired by Korea, Italy and Portugal. The Working Group has established a community of policy practitioners in the MENA region to promote open and digital government, open data, and public sector innovation, and the ways in which they can contribute and add value to the economic, social, and governance goals in the region.

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme

The MENA-OECD Governance Programme is a strategic partnership between governments in the MENA region and OECD members 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. In particular, the Programme supports the implementation of the G7 Deauville Partnership and assists governments in meeting the eligibility criteria to become a member of the Open Government Partnership. Through these initiatives, 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 those in the MENA region 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 policymaking and transparency.

CONTACT

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