



Good Public Governance for Development

**in Middle Eastern and North African Countries
(MENA)**

**Agenda
Expert meeting**

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 29-30 April 2004

I Background

The expert meeting in Morocco is part of the preparatory phase for an initiative on good public governance for development in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries. It is a follow-up on a meeting in Istanbul that among other proposals, invited the OECD and the UNDP to undertake further preparatory work to detail the terms of reference of the proposed thematic working groups that would be a key instrument for implementing the initiative.

The meeting¹ that took place in Istanbul, 10/11 of February including senior officials and representatives from 10 MENA governments and delegates from 10 OECD countries, as well as several regional and international organisations and NGOs² resulted in a consensus to move forward based on:

1. Strong encouragement for MENA countries to strengthen their anti-corruption policies and their enforcement, and to take affirmative measures to adopt and implement the UN Convention against Corruption.
2. The call of MENA country representatives on donor countries and international organisations, including the G8 and the OECD, to support the countries of the region in promoting good public governance and in improving the investment climate.
3. The call of MENA country representatives on the OECD and the UNDP to support public governance reform in the region through launching an OECD/UNDP Good Public Governance Initiative based on the full commitment of MENA countries. There was wide agreement that there is currently a window of opportunity to make a new start on implementing reform.
4. The identification of six priority themes of the policy reform agenda : i) Civil service, integrity, delivery and transparent decision-making processes, ii) Administrative simplification, regulatory reform, iii) E-government, budget transparency, iv) Public/private partnerships, v) Legal reform, audit, control and enforcement, vi) civil society and media.
5. The proposal to organise working groups around those themes each possibly co-chaired by a country of the region and an OECD country. A core steering group would direct and monitor the working groups.
6. The offer to convene an expert group, in Morocco, in order to develop in greater detail the six themes and how to move forward on each.

¹ The opening session of this meeting was chaired by OECD Deputy Secretary-General Richard Hecklinger and Omer Dincer, Undersecretary of the Prime Minister's Office in Turkey. The concluding session, was co-chaired by Mr. Salah El-Din Al-Bashir, Minister of Justice, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Dr. José-Maria Sousa Rêgo, the Secretary General of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Portugal.

² MENA: Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen.

OECD: Professor Helfried Bauer, Austria, Mr. Mario Garcés Sanagustín, Spain, Mr. David Luna, United States, Mr. Jean-Loup Petit and Mr. Bernard Benhamou, France, Ambassador Francesco Olivieri and Ms. Fiorenza Barazzoni, Italy, Mr. Shigeo Matsutomi and Mr. Junichi Sugawara, Japan, Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz, Poland, Mr. José-Maria Sousa Rêgo, Portugal, Mr. Daniel Trnka, Czech Republic, Mr. Omer Dinçer, Mr. Emin Zararsız and Ms. Ilgin Atalay, Turkey, Ms. Axel Nicaise, European Commission.

Organisations: UNDESA, UNDP, World Bank, Union of Arab Banks, Arab Administrative Development Organisation, Arab Journalist Federation, Arab Lawyer Union, Transparency Jordan, Transparency Lebanon.

7. The proposal to coordinate the work on good public governance with the related and ongoing efforts on investment and corporate governance, to the benefit of both.
8. The offer by H.E. Al-Bashir to host a ministerial meeting in Jordan later this year with a view to officially launching the OECD/UNDP Good Public Governance Initiative.

The discussions in Istanbul focussed on 6 priority areas of public governance reform, identified as those likely to yield the most promising results over a 3 year period of reform, in terms of improving the investment climate and conditions for economic development.

- Civil service, integrity and transparent decision-making processes
- Administrative simplification, regulatory reform
- E-government, budget transparency
- Public/private partnership
- Legal reform, audit, control and enforcement
- Civil society and media

These priority areas are seen to be mutually reinforcing within the framework of a whole-of-government approach. This view is confirmed through the OECD country experiences, which suggest that integrated policy measures are more effective, as they address governance issues in a horizontal, cross-cutting and holistic manner. The list of themes is seen as a flexible framework that can bring in other aspects of good public governance if MENA countries request additional activities in the future.

II Objective of the Morocco expert group meeting

The objective of the Morocco meeting is to move forward the Istanbul consensus on the OECD/UNDP initiative on good public governance for MENA countries by defining Terms of references for the thematic working groups as stipulated in the conclusions of the Istanbul meeting as well as working methods of the initiative. This will include

- drafting the terms of reference for each of the six thematic working groups. The terms of reference will specify strategic issues for public sector modernisation in the MENA countries, provide questions to guide the policy dialogue and provide OECD principles, recommendations and best practice guidelines. The OECD secretariat will provide a draft text as a starting point to assist the discussions.
- defining proposals for the working methods of the public governance initiative (workshop discussions, country missions, case studies, best practice guideline, policy handbooks, country evaluations/reviews, comparative studies, etc.) and outputs/outcome of the initiative as a whole. It is to be discussed whether outputs/outcomes and working methods could vary between the thematic groups.
- contributing to the drafting of a strategic work programme including a programme of action to be submitted to a high-level launching meeting later in 2004. The experts group would also discuss strategic elements of the initiative as timing and sequencing of the individual elements mentioned above, the budget and a monitoring system.

III Working method and Participants Profile

The meeting will be structured as a small scale expert meeting to allow for genuine discussion and concrete progress in drafting a number of documents as described above. This implies an agenda without pre-planned presentations but rather results-oriented flexible discussions around the draft text for the terms of reference and on the elements and building blocks of the proposed initiative. The discussions of the terms of reference of the thematic working groups can be organised in break out sessions in the afternoon of day one.

The participants would be experts in policy issues pertaining to the six issues as identified in the Istanbul conclusions. They command a good understanding of the policy challenges in MENA countries. They are not necessarily representing governments. The current participants include former ministers, academics, and other high-level actors with outstanding capacities and skills to contribute to the objectives of the meeting.

The results of the Morocco meeting will be shared with the MENA and OECD governments for comments and final approval at the high-level meeting possibly in Jordan in October 2004.

IV Overview on Thematic Working Groups (including proposed modifications for discussion)

1 Civil service and integrity

- Civil Service Reform
- Professional and integer Civil Service

2 Administrative simplification, regulatory reform and e-government

- Administrative simplification
- Regulatory reform
- Private sector consultation
- E-government

3 Governance of Public Resources

- Budgeting, Financial Management and Reporting
- Multilevel territorial governance

4 Public/private partnership

- Public service delivery for citizens and the private sector

5 Role of the judiciary, audit, control and enforcement

- Audit and Control and Enforcement
- Judicial reform and Enforcement

6 Civil society and media

- Civil society and Citizen/State relations
- Media

Agenda

Wednesday, 28 April, 2004

19:30 Welcome reception, Hotel

Thursday, 29 April, 2004

Morning Session: 9:30 – 13:00

9:30 – 10:45 Session 1: Introduction and Objectives.

Co-Chairs:

- His Excellency Mr. Najib Zerouali, Minister of Public Sector Modernisation of the Kingdom of Morocco,
- Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Regional Co-ordinator of the UNDP-Programme on Governance in the Arab region (POGAR), UNDP

Introductory Remarks:

- His Excellency Mr. Najib Zerouali, Minister of Public Sector Modernisation of the Kingdom of Morocco,
- Mrs. Odile Sallard, Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD.
- Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Regional Co-ordinator of the UNDP-Programme on Governance in the Arab region (POGAR), UNDP
- OECD member country representative

Objectives and approach of the meeting

- Mr. Rolf Alter, Deputy-Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break

11:15 – 13:00 Session 2: The whole-of-government framework of the Initiative: Overall structure of themes and working groups.

Co-Chairs:

- Mr. Anis Birrou, Secretary General, Ministry of Public Sector Modernisation, Morocco
- Mr. Rolf Alter, Deputy-Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD

Objective and approach of Session 2

The objective of session 2 is to provide a clear and coherent overall design of themes and working groups. Based on the 6 themes the group will discuss whether the present structure is satisfactory or where options for further improvements exist. To this end an option for a modified structure is contained in the draft Terms of reference document.

The thematic framework could be discussed based on the following criteria:

- how reform in these policy areas can help to improve the climate for business, investment and job creation directly or at least indirectly?
- in which policy areas the OECD/UNDP has a comparative advantage, within the framework of promoting regional policy dialogue?
- do the issues fit well in an integrated, whole-of-government approach that allows for mutually reinforcing reform steps that lead to genuine behavioural and systematic change of institutions, which can be sustained successfully over time?
- is there a clear and sufficiently homogeneous target group of policy actors that can make progress on these issues and are in the position to implement practical reform steps?
- is there a critical number of MENA countries that are ready or soon ready to take steps in these policy areas?

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Afternoon Break-out Session 3: 14:00 – 17:30

14:00 – 15:45 Session 3 first round: Terms of reference for the working groups. Detailing policy issues and questions for dialogue of each working group.

Objective and approach of Session 3

The objective of session 3 is to give further detail to the terms of reference of each working group. This work will be carried out based on the results from Session 2 and will be supported by the draft text for the terms of reference provided by the secretariat.

The session 3 will be run in the form of break-out session to allow more in-depth discussions and drafting on the different sets of terms of references for the six different working groups.

15:45 – 16:15 Coffee break

16: 15 – 17:30 Session 3 continued: Terms of reference for the working groups. Detailing policy issues and questions for dialogue of each working group

17:30 – 17:45 Rapporteurs in Plenary Session:

- UNDP and OECD secretariat

A reception for the participants of the meeting will take place at 7.30 p.m. in the hotel.

Friday, 30 April, 2004

Morning Session: 9:00 – 14:00

Co-Chairs:

- Mr. Anis Birrou, Secretary General, Ministry of Public Sector Modernisation, Morocco
- OECD member country representative

9:00 – 11:00 Session 4: Working methods, tools, outputs and outcomes of the working groups

Objective and approach of Session 4

This session will discuss how the working groups can practically contribute to policy reform in MENA countries. To this end participants will discuss different options of working methods, tools and outputs and how they would lead to policy outcomes. There might be possibly also gradually different approaches by thematic working groups to take into account of specificities of policy issues in those groups.

11:00 – 11:15 Rapporteur Session 4:

- Mr. Wassim Harb, Expert, UNDP-Programme on Governance in the Arab region (POGAR), UNDP

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:15 Session 5: Designing, sequencing, budgeting and monitoring of the Initiative

Objective and Approach of Session 5

This session aims at linking the thematic and methodological discussion on the working group level with a strategic overall framework. Discussions would therefore contribute to designing an integrated time framework of how the thematic working groups would move from an analysis of present public governance policies, to an exchange of policy experiences towards national reform action plans, including their implementation and monitoring of outcomes. This discussion will be closely linked to the identification of an appropriate budgetary framework and the design of a monitoring instrument in order to assure a results-oriented programme implementation.

13:15 – 13:30 Rapporteur Session 5:

- Mr. Martin Forst, Principal Administrator, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD.

13:30 – 14:00 Conclusions of the meeting

- Mr. Anis Birrou, Secretary General, Ministry of Public Sector Modernisation, Morocco
- Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Regional Co-ordinator of the UNDP-Programme on Governance in the Arab region (POGAR), UNDP
- Mrs. Odile Sallard, Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD.
- OECD member country representative

14:00 Meeting closure

14:00 – 15:00 Lunch