



MENA-OECD COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME
MENA-OECD Regional
Conference on Statistics
Better evidence for better
policies

DRAFT AGENDA

15 April 2019

OECD Conference Centre, CC 13

Paris, France



Context

Leveraging on the OECD and Member Countries to support the development of policy relevant statistics across the MENA region.

High-quality and reliable statistics are critical for informing the development of effective policies and for monitoring and measuring the implementation, impact and effectiveness, of development policies, which can in turn ensure effective and targeted use of valuable strategic resources.

Recent years have seen significant improvements in the capacities of MENA economies and their development of legal frameworks supporting the development of robust national statistical offices. Nevertheless, the evidence also points to considerable differences across the region in key statistics required for sound policy making and, in particular, in developing robust development strategies that can deliver broad based and inclusive growth. Very few economies in the region, for example, currently have strategies or statistics in place to assess well-being in their economies, or indeed to assess distributional differences in income and wealth that can hamper sustainable growth. Moreover, very few statistics are currently available to provide a view on how MENA economies can leverage on global phenomena such as globalisation and digitalisation, to drive inclusive and sustainable growth and improve international competitiveness. For example, amongst MENA economies, only Morocco, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia are currently included in the OECD's Trade in Value Added database (an essential statistical tool for countries to develop policies that can capitalise on global value chains). This highlights the importance of accelerating the region's efforts to develop and align their data with international standards.

Objectives of the event

- **Describe a range of OECD statistics and tools that can help drive the development of inclusive and sustainable development, and competitiveness strategies, and to assess current capacities in the region to meet required international standards in these areas.**
- **Develop a common strategy under the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme to support the development of better statistics on competitiveness.**
- **Develop a common strategy for the development of statistics that can support broad based inclusive growth.**

15 April – OECD Conference Centre – CC 13

8:30 – 9:00 Registration

9:00 – 9:15 Welcome remarks

- **Ms. Lamia Zribi**, President, National Statistics Council, Tunisia
- **Mr. Paul Schreyer**, Deputy Director, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD
- **Mr. Carlos Conde**, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

9:15-10:15 Session 1: Statistics for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

In recent years, there has been a growing realisation that macro-economic statistics, such as GDP, cannot be the only tools used to assess growth. The evidence shows that more inclusive societies are also able to deliver higher growth but very few, if any, economies in the MENA region currently produce statistics that are able to guide the development of inclusive and sustainable growth. This session presents two (related) statistical initiatives that are advancing on this front. The session also addresses public services' performance data as an acknowledgement of the role the public sector plays towards building fairer societies.

Moderator

Ms. Romina Boarini, Senior Advisor and Co-ordinator of the Inclusive Growth Initiative, Secretariat General, OECD

Speakers

Mr. Marco Mira D'Ercole, Head of the Household Statistics and Progress Measurement Division, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *The Better Life Index*

Ms. Carlotta Balestra, Policy Analyst, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *Measures of distributional income and wealth*

Mr. Santiago Gonzalez, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate, OECD

- *Government at a Glance*

Questions & answers

10:15-11:00 Session 2: Gender disaggregated data

Gender equality is a fundamental driver for more inclusive and equitable societies and, as such, reducing the level of global gender inequality and promoting women's economic empowerment must be at the forefront of the global political agenda. In order to enhance and reap the benefits of women's economic empowerment, policy makers need to have a clear picture of the economic situation of women as it stands, through the collection and analysis of reliable gender-specific data. The availability of gender-specific data will allow governments to deepen their understanding of gender inequality and allow them to monitor and track progress over time.

Moderator

Mr. Carlos Conde, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

Speakers

Mr. Maxime Ladaique, Manager of Statistical Resources, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

- *The OECD Gender Data Portal*

Ms. Charlotte Goemans, Policy Analyst, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

- *Gender disaggregated data in the MENA region*

Questions & answers

11:00-11:15 Coffee break

11.15:12:30 Session 3: Statistics to drive entrepreneurship and productivity

Sustainable growth requires solid information on the business environment and its performance. Are countries creating the right types of jobs in the right type of firms that can capitalise on 21st century production? Solid and comprehensive business statistics, including on the self-employed, are essential in guiding the development of policies that can foster growth while also providing insights where current policies may be having adverse consequences. This second session provides information on two core sets of OECD indicators, with examples of co-operation programmes, that can help advise policy makers.

Speakers

Ms. Mariarosa Lunati, Head of the Entrepreneurship, Productivity and Microdata Section, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *The OECD Structural and Demographic Business Statistics (SDBS)*

Ms. Belen Zinni, Statistician and Analyst, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *The OECD Productivity Database*

Mr. Marco Marchese, Economist, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

- *Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurship: An OECD Scoreboard*

Questions & answers

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break at Marshall Room

In a world dominated by global value chains (GVCs), comparative advantages are more about how countries make products (i.e. the tasks they engage in) rather than what they make (the products they export). GVCs have provided countries with opportunities to specialise in parts of an overall global production process. In North America, Europe and Asia where countries have successfully leveraged on GVCs, GVCs have been built around strong regional chains that have been able to drive higher value-added exports capitalising on comparative advantages in skills, labour and capital within, and foreign investment into, those regions. But in the MENA region, anecdotal information points to weak regional and global integration, except in activities at the beginning of value chains (extraction industries). Very few economies in the region are currently included in the OECD's TiVA database, partly reflecting statistical weaknesses in core statistical tools, such as Supply-Use Tables and high-quality estimates of Trade (including Trade in Services). This third session describes these tools and the insights that can be gained from them, and describes an on-going initiative with Morocco.

Moderator

Mr. Nadim Ahmad, Head of the Trade and Competitiveness Statistics Division, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

Speakers

H.E. Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director General of Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA), UAE

- *The UAE's perspective on statistics leading to competitiveness and sustainable growth*

Mr. Ali Alsamawi, Economist, Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD

- *OECD Trade in Value-Added Database*

Ms. Maria Borga, Head of the International Investment Statistics Unit, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, OECD

- *OECD Database on Foreign Direct Investment*

Mr. Nadim Ahmad, Head of the Trade and Competitiveness Statistics Division, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *OECD Trade by Enterprise Characteristic Database and Databases on Balanced Trade*
- *OECD Engagement with Morocco to Develop More Granular Insights on GVCs*

Questions & answers

16:00-16:40 Session 5: Existing OECD programmes to support statistical infrastructure and capacities

The OECD, through PARIS21 and through the Statistical Information System Collaboration Community, which helps to build an open-source platform for the dissemination of statistics, is also engaged in programmes to improve statistics and the dissemination of statistics (in a cost effective way) within the region. This session provides information on these programmes as input to the final session.

Moderator

Mr. Roger Forés, Policy Analyst, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

Speakers

Ms. El Iza Mohamedou, Deputy Head, PARIS21

- *The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21)*

Mr. Jonathan Challener, Community Manager, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD

- *Statistical Information System Collaboration Community (SIS-CC)*

Questions & answers

16:40 – 17:30

Taking stock of the current MENA presence in OECD statistical databases and way forward

A round table discussion will be held for participants to openly exchange on national experiences and perspectives to help the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme define its strategy to support a regional initiative on improved statistics.

Moderator

Mr. Carlos Conde, Head of the Middle East and Africa Division, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

Ms. Kalthoum Hamzaoui, Director General for Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation, Tunisia

Round table

17:30 – 17:45

Closing remarks

- **Ms. Lamia Zribi**, President, National Statistics Council, Tunisia
- **Mr. Nadim Ahmad**, Head of the Trade and Competitiveness Statistics Division, Statistics and Data Directorate, OECD
- **Mr. Andreas Schaal**, Director, Global Relations Secretariat, OECD

17:45 - 19:30

Cocktail at Roger Ockrent Room

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