

# Impact Assessment Report on the activities of the MENA OECD Governance Programme Centre 2013–2017





## THE OECD

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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 made up of 35 member countries, a secretariat in Paris, and a committee, 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. We collaborate with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment.



## MENA-OECD Governance Programme

### THE MENA-OECD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME

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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. 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 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 MENA-OECD GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME CENTRE OF CASERTA

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**The MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre of Caserta** has been established in September 2012, by The Italian National School of Administration (SNA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with the mission of developing training courses to support the public administrations of the Arab countries and to promote initiatives for capacity building, in order to pursue efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector and Good Governance.

The Centre of Caserta is part of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, which fosters public sector reforms and strengthens international cooperation with a view to promote sustainable economic growth in the MENA Region. The Programme is a strategic partnership between OECD countries and the MENA region to share knowledge and expertise. It's vision and priorities for 2016-2020 are laid out in the Tunis Declaration adopted on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in Tunisia.

The MENA-OECD Governance Centre is also part of the Action Plan on Open Governance and Anticorruption of the G7 Deauville Partnership for Arab Countries in Transition (Governance Pillar).

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The Royal Palace of Caserta near Naples, Italy.



The Advisory Committee supports the management of the Centre on the definition and implementation of its programme of work.

It is composed of a representative of the SNA; a representative of the OECD; the Chair and Co-chair of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme; the Ministers of Public Administration (or similar institutions); of all interested MENA and OECD countries and donors, scholars and partners from the public and private sectors.

The Centre is managed by a Management Board, which decides on the detailed activities coordinated by the Centre and discusses the future direction.

It is composed of the President of the SNA (or his/her delegate); the Director of the Public Governance Directorate of the OECD (or his/her delegate) and the Executive Director of the Centre.

As part of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, the Centre reports to and aligns its priorities with the OECD Public Governance Committee, the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee, the OECD External Relations Committee and the Steering Committee of the MENA-OECD Initiative. The Centre further serves as a knowledge hub to promote and enrich the work of the regional Working Groups of the Programme in providing a space for regional exchange and learning.



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## INTRODUCTION

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### PARTNERS

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To foster dialogue between MENA and OECD countries, and set up a fruitful cooperation with the main stakeholders in the MENA region, the Centre signed several agreements with international and regional organizations involved in the promotion of good governance, the enhancement of public administration efficiency and the development of the area.

These agreements led to the implementation of joint activities, thus creating synergies among the parties. At the moment, the MENA-OECD Centre benefits from the partnership with the following organizations:

- **Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO):** The MENA-OECD Training Centre signed a MoU with the Arab Administrative Development Organisation for the implementation of exchange and cooperative initiatives in the areas of training, research, best practices and promotion of dialogue on Public Administration issues.
- **EURO-MED Development Centre (EMDC):** The MENA-OECD Training Centre, with the aim to foster regional integration, cooperation and partnership among OECD and MENA countries, signed a MoU with the EMDC Foundation (EURO-MED Development Centre) to develop joint activities, trainings, conferences and seminars, involving the public and private sector of the Mediterranean countries.
- **World Bank:** The World Bank is cooperating with the Centre in several sectors, in order to promote good governance, accountability and open government principles.
- **SDA Bocconi School of Management:** The MENA-OECD Centre has an academic partnership with the Bocconi School of Management, a prominent Italian University that supports the Centre in delivering high-level and innovative capacity building activities.
- **Centre Africain de Formation et de Recherche Administratives pour le Développement (CAFRAD):** The African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development develops together with the Centre capacity building activities addressed also to the sub-Saharan region

### MISSION & VALUES

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The Centre, as a training facility of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme contributes to implement the OECD agenda in the region by providing a wide-range of measures intended to guide the design and implementation of public policies based on good practices promoted by the OECD, in partnership with the Italian Government.

It allows for benchmarking across countries and finding common standards of good practice.

It also helps to consolidate and further promote the objectives of the OECD agenda in the MENA region and engage governments in policy dialogue and in the exchange and dissemination of good practices between the OECD countries and the MENA Region and within the MENA countries. The Centre aims to support governments in identifying strategic priorities to further improve good governance and public & private partnership.

The Centre boasts innovative aspects as it is designed and conceived as a laboratory of good governance. Given the strategic cooperation with the Italian National School of Administration, an important public think-tank in the field of training and research for public sector managers and civil servants, the Centre has inherited thus a distinguished experience in international training and a significant network of public actors who contribute to its activities.

### ACTIVITIES

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With the establishment of the MENA-OECD Government Programme Centre, the OECD and SNA commit to promote knowledge dissemination and good administrative practices from MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) and OECD countries, in order to ensure not only the development of individual skills, but also the improvement of the organisational contexts in which public officials operate, the results of their administrative action, and the processes of public sector modernization.

The Centre functions as a hub not only for high quality international training but also for policy dialogue, network building and study visits. From the methodological point of view, the task of the international Centre is to develop both

traditional courses as well as lectures based on technology advanced distance-learning methodologies, in order to appropriately customize standard training products and to meet the specific needs of beneficiary countries.

Initiatives implemented by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre of Caserta rely on contribution of The Italian National School of Administration, the OECD and other institutional and private partners.

Working in close cooperation with other regional and international organizations, the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre supports the Middle East and North Africa region in its crucial moment for the reform and modernization of public governance, in order to enhance integrity, accountability, citizen participation, transparency, job creation, and sustainable development in the region.

It constitutes an unprecedented forum for policy dialogue, peer exchange, capacity building, as well as policy recommendations. It focuses, in particular, on the following areas: integrity in public administration, e-government,

open and innovative government, strengthening budget transparency, public services, public-private partnerships, rule of law and regulatory reforms, gender equality and women's participation in policy making and parliament, employment and local governance.

The Centre offers various capacity building activities to senior and middle-level public officials, in order to develop and implement a national policy and reforms fuelled by international best practices and principles.

These activities also aim to strengthen the role of highly skilled policy makers and practitioners that will play a crucial role in the development and implementation of these improved policies.

Since its inception, numerous capacity building activities were organized by the Centre.

About 1.500 participants, from over 40 countries, were involved in various initiatives, with significant outcomes in terms of cooperation within the MENA region, and between the MENA region and other countries.



Round Table Forum on "Public Governance and the Role of Citizens in shaping the Open Government dialogue", 2-4 June 2015.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

The objective of this assessment is to provide tangible information on the impact of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre.

It should be noted that the intervention provided from the Center since its establishment in 2012 goes further than mere “training”. The Centre distinguishes itself by a high political value to support MENA countries’ institutions towards the path of good governance, a strategic priority of the OECD and of the Italian Government.

This assessment might also serve to design a tool to assess public policy frameworks and to monitor progress in policy implementation over time.

The report concludes with recommendations for possible future actions.

### IMPACT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The assessment was conducted by the personnel of the MENA-OECD Centre with support and in consultation with the Evaluation and Studies Unit of the Italian School of Administration. It contains a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results achieved by the Centre since its establishment.

From a qualitative point of view, the report assesses the activities of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre in terms of “compliance” with the:

- legal framework, represented by the provisions of the memorandum of understanding of 2013, between SNA and OECD;

- institutional framework, particularly with the political priorities identified by OECD and MENA countries in their main official documents and reports.

From a quantitative point of view, the report evaluates the impact of the MENA-OECD Centre’s activities under three key categories: “learning”, “awareness” and “behavioral and organizational change”.

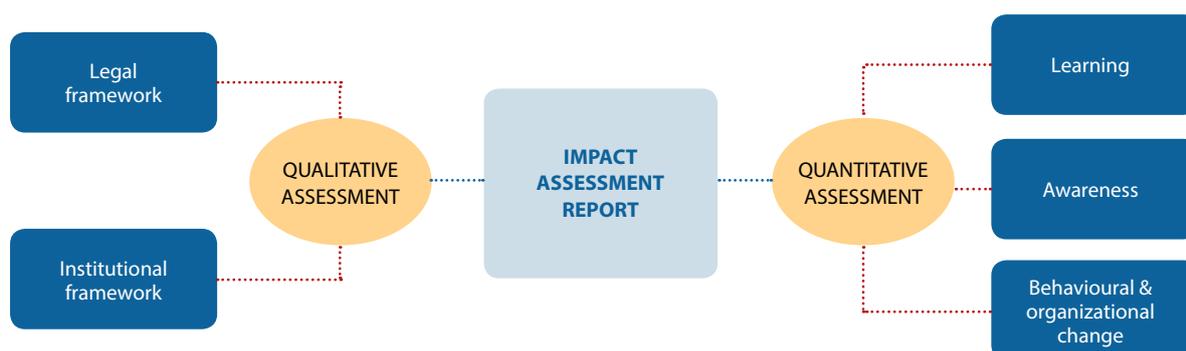
This report, therefore, contains the overall evaluation of the results of the Centre’s programmes, as measured by the evaluation questionnaires and the interviews conducted during the training events (seminars, workshops, round tables and meetings ).

Emphasis is given also to the results of training needs, conducted in order to give application to requests received from the counterparts about the need to continue this kind of capacity building programmes for all the countries belonging to the MENA region.

### OVERALL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The assessment shows that the Training Centre has become a hub of knowledge sharing, capacity building and for networks of policy practitioners in the priority fields jointly identified by MENA and OECD countries in the Ministerial Declarations of the Initiative as well as in the regional working groups. By extension, the work of the Centre has focused on public procurement, public finance management & budgeting, anti-corruption, open government & e-government and human resources management.

Firstly, the analysis of the initiatives conducted by the MENA-OECD Centre show a high rate of compliance with





Open Data Seminar, 18-21 October 2015.

the purposes originally planned in the MOU, by SNA and OECD as well as a coherence with the socio-economic and institutional goals of MENA countries as defined in policy documents of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme (i.e. the programme's priorities and the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conferences declarations). Thus, the Centre has been highly relevant to support the strategic objectives of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.

Secondly, the Centre has been successful in building the needed capacities, promoting change and creating regional and international networks as conditions for policy practitioners from the region to design and implement public governance policy reforms.

The first objective of the programmes ("learning") is being met as the training has increased the participants' knowledge on the following topics: transparency, accountability, open government, PPP, strategic planning and budget expenditure policies, public procurement – within the general focus to foster good governance in the MENA region. The assessment of the pre-training and post-training test shows that the major part of the participants have significantly improved, or have improved, the specific knowledge of topics related to the training activities. The advances in public financial management reform in Tunisia or open government in Morocco show that policy practitioners are translating newly acquired expertise in public governance reforms.

In line with the second objective, the training courses and other networking events organized by the Centre contribute to strengthened mutual awareness of being part of a supranational network in which the differences, in regard to cultural, socio-economic, political background, are valorized as useful elements for a human and professional common growth. A large number of trainees, indeed, have established permanent or occasional contacts with other colleagues from the MENA

Region. In this sense, mutual learning has contributed to common approaches in the region. For example, the Regional Network of Public Procurement Officials has benefitted from the Centre's activities. The courses also helped the participants develop a common understanding of the issues surrounding good governance, open government, public procurement, etc. Another example of the impact of the Centre's work includes the development of a regional study on Digital Government Strategies in the MENA region which was facilitated through regional dialogue, and which identified common trends and common challenges in benchmarking countries against OECD Recommendations.

Finally, the activities organized by the Centre have tangibly reinforced international cooperation, by expanding the OECD network of mutually supportive public policy managers, generally able to produce tangible improvements in their administrations, in terms of internal organization, administrative procedures, developing of soft skills, etc. In general, the participants believe that capabilities and skills have been significantly improved or have been improved by the training activities. The data revealed that those who performed liaison functions for their institutions after having taken the training or experience were more likely to have applied aspects of the training/simulations in public policies put in place. For example Libyan public officials were introduced to OECD standards and principles and reported on the practicality of the training post-workshop.

The training and networking events of the Centre have thus been crucial element of implementation support complementing the MENA-OECD Governance Programme's policy analysis and advice - a finding which has been confirmed by the annual evaluations of the Programme in the framework of the MENA-OECD Steering Group Meetings.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

### QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT – LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In the first field of the qualitative assessment, the report uses the criterion of “compliance”, in relation with the legal-institutional framework of MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre’s initiatives, represented by the Memorandum of Understanding between SNA and OECD, signed in 2013.

In the Memorandum, indeed, there are several provisions about the institutional opportunities related to this Centre, and the general purposes of this kind of cooperation.

This first evaluation, therefore, provides useful information if and to which extend the capacity building’s activities comply with the legal and institutional formal commitments made by the different parties, and thus to which extend the Centre contributes to the priorities of the OECD, and in particular the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and the Public Governance Committee and the SNA.

Consequently, a joint reading of the MOU’s content and the MENA-OECD Centre’s initiatives serves as the evaluation methodology.

### QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In the second field of the qualitative assessment, the report uses the criterion of “compliance” with the institutional framework in which MENA-OECD Centre’s activities were implemented, represented by the:

- MENA-OECD Governance Programme and its regional Working Groups;
- Ministerial Declarations of the MENA-OECD Initiative

This type of evaluation offers fundamental information about the coherence of the Centre’s activities with the priorities of the MENA governments’ public sector reforms and, generally, with their efforts in terms of structural policies for socio-economic development, thus assessing to which extend the Centre’s activities are contributing to reform implementation in the region.

A joint reading of the above-mentioned official documents, and the MENA-OECD Centre’s activities, therefore, represents the assessment methodology.

### QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT – “LEARNING”

This part of the evaluation attempts to assess the extent to which the trainee has enhanced knowledge and/or improved skills or attitudes through the training process. It builds upon the assumption that improved expertise will enable a more effective implementation of public sector reforms.

Participants arrive with different levels of expertise and it is envisaged that they will gain different advantage from each training session. For these reasons, the methodology is composed of two different tools.



First of all, the evaluation focuses on the reaction to the training/class simulations/ interventions. In other words, it measures how the participants reacted to a training programme. Accordingly, the immediate participants’ satisfaction was measured through a questionnaire handed out at the end of the training. A positive reaction is conducive to increased learning while a negative reaction is a hindrance to learning.

The second group of questions are directly linked with the category of *learning*. Comparisons of pre-training and post-training test results are used to assess the trainees change in knowledge. This type of anonymous survey shows clearly to which extend participants’ knowledge has increased, in relation to a specific field of training.

### QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT – “AWARENESS”

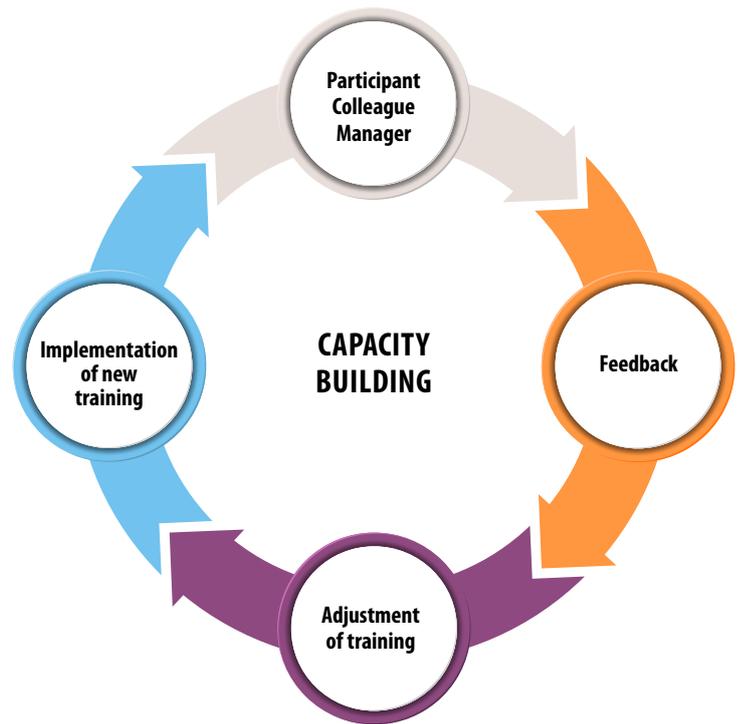
The essence of the MENA-OECD Centre’s activities consists of an interdisciplinary approach that allows discussing, in a supranational framework, possible solutions to real problems that public managers and civil servants face in their daily working contexts. This type of evaluation assesses how much the awareness of participants has been increased and which are the main reasons of this improvement.

## QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT – “BEHAVIORAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE”

This evaluation consists of two steps. The first level of evaluation (behavioral change) focuses on the extent to which the trainee’s behavior has in fact changed as a result of the training. It seeks to establish if newly acquired knowledge, skills or attitudes are being applied in the working environment of the trainee.

The second level of assessment (organizational change) focuses on the organizational results provided by the training.

The methodology used to identify behavioural and organizational changes was based on self-assessment, through a rating expressed by the trainees, and through interviews and a collection of feedback expressed by their colleagues and managers.



Integrity and procurement workshop and meeting of the MENA-OECD Network on Public Procurement, 19-21 November 2014.

## QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

### GENERAL DATA

At the end of the activity-cycle carried out between 2013 and 2016, the Centre has managed to examine its actions through a quantitative analysis. The study

was possible thanks to a process of accurate investigation and information gathering, provided by about 1500 participants from about 40 countries participating in the following initiatives of the MENA-OECD Centre.

Main topics	Specific subjects/	Participants/experts
<b>Network Meeting on Public procurement</b>	Promotion of the interregional dialogue to support integrity and transparency in public procurement	55 participants from: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Palestinian Authority, France, Korea, Italy
<b>Workshops on Public finance management / Open budget data</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transparency in fiscal issues related with good fiscal performance and budgeting</li> <li>2. Open budget data</li> </ol>	<p>86 high officials from Ministry of Finance and other central institutions of Tunisia /experts coming from Australia, Brazil, Italy, South Africa, United Kingdom</p> <p>65 participants from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia</p>
<b>Operational Meetings on Distance learning for innovation in the public sector</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovative instruments of dissemination of training methods</li> <li>2. The role of open data in the open government policies</li> </ol>	<p>80 participants from Bahrein, Egypt and Morocco</p> <p>60 participants from Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco</p>
<b>Seminar on State building efforts of Libya and fostering good governance</b>	Public finance management in order to sharing the experiences of MENA countries, encouraging the acquisition of appropriate strategic and practical tools in order to accompany the ongoing democratic process in this area.	63 high ranking officials of central and local administrations of Egypt and Tunisia
<b>Seminars on Capacity building to support governance in Libya</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Principles and effective measures for the promotion of transparency in public administrations, through the active participation of citizens, civil society and business. Issues related to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) were also addressed and analyzed.</li> <li>2. Improving public budgeting capabilities in the local government</li> <li>3. Human resources management models</li> </ol>	<p>60 participants coming from the Ministry of Planning and other public offices</p> <p>60 participants</p> <p>50 participants</p>
<b>Regional workshop in cooperation with World Bank for the promotion of transparency, of accountability and of partnership</b>	Presentation and discussion on report of procurement systems of 6 countries of Deauville Partnership, discussion on recent reforms of the sector on Mena Countries level, communication strategy aiming at implementation of reforms and market needs analysis at the first steps of the public tenders.	60 participants from Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Oman

<b>Seminars cycle on capacity building and fostering governance in Libya (in fulfilment of the agreement between Italian government and the Ministry of Labour and the National Institute of Management of the Libyan Government)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Human resources management</li> <li>2. Public finance management</li> <li>3. Public procurement</li> <li>4. Fight against corruption, transparency and integrity</li> </ol>	50 participants 58 participants 50 participants 38 participants
<b>Regional Seminar for promotion of transparency, accountability and partnership (with the World Bank)</b>	Discussion and analysis on systems of administrative processes able to apply principles of openness, transparency, participation of citizens, responsibility and efficacy.	65 participants from Libya, Morocco, Yemen, Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Croatia, Korea, Georgia, Romania
<b>Workshops on “administrative efforts to support SMEs development”</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public policies on the access of financial instruments and capital for innovative SME – administrative efforts to support SME and in particular to regulate the system of public-private partnership.</li> <li>2. The importance of open government for a business-friendly public administration</li> </ol>	76 participants from Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt.  60 participants from Jordan, Oman, Tunisia
<b>Training seminar on strategic planning and budgeting expenditures</b>	Disseminating knowledge and experiences on strategic planning and budget performance evaluation through case-studies from both countries.	28 civil servants from the Ministry of economic development of Turkey
<b>Training seminars on integrity, procurement, anticorruption</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dissemination of different instruments to implement best practices of integrity in different administrations</li> <li>2. Dissemination of different instruments to implement innovative systems of e-procurement</li> <li>3. Dissemination of different anticorruption organizational instruments</li> </ol>	60 participants from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, UAE, Oman, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, France, Korea 80 participants from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq 80 participants from Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya
<b>Annual meeting of global network of the Schools and Institutes of Public Administration on Open Government</b>	Capacity building on the ground	80 participants from USA, Morocco, Australia, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Tunisia, Spain, Kazakhstan, Russia, Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, Holland, Poland, Hungary, Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Egypt.
<b>Round table event co-chaired ARADO on public governance and the role of the citizens in shaping the open government dialogue</b>	Open government and the role of the citizens on the process of	80 participants from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, Oman, Yemen, Bahrain, Italy, France, Spain.
<b>Seminars on open government and on open data</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dissemination of guidelines of OCSE on technology ICT in promoting of transparency and accountability of anticorruption measures on different levels of government.</li> <li>2. ICT innovation and citizens’ participation in the decision making process</li> </ol>	70 participants from Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, UAE, Bahrain, Oman.  60 participants from Bahrein, Egypt and Morocco

As reported in figure 1, the analysis shows that the main topics of the capacity building activities can be divided in 5 main sectors of intervention:

- public procurement
- public finance management & budgeting
- anticorruption
- open government & e-government
- human resources management.

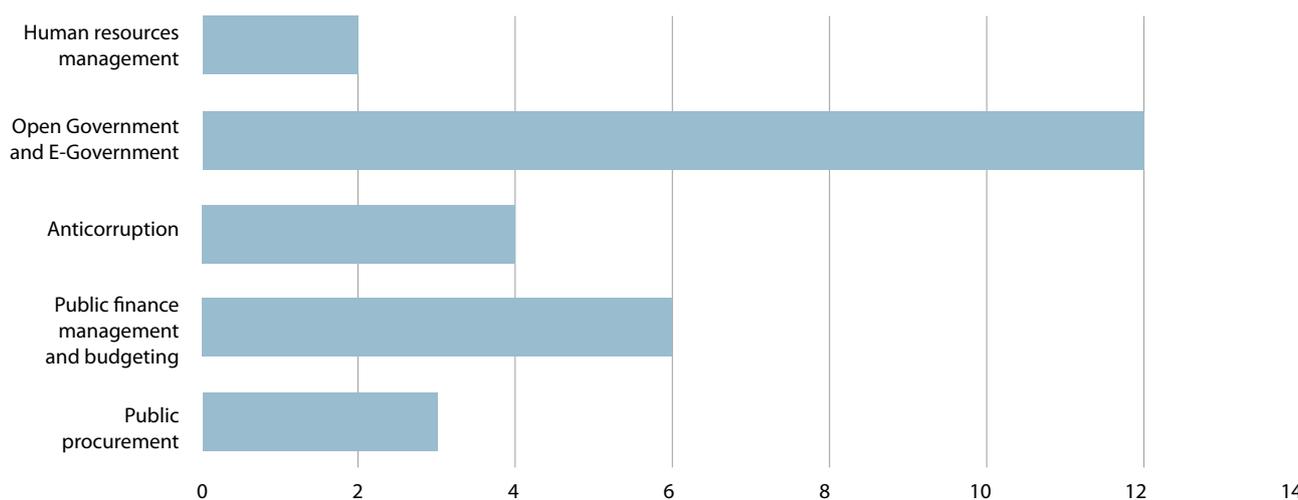
Some topics were jointly discussed on a single occasion, consequently, the total amount of the sectors of intervention does not correspond to the total number of initiatives.

These topics were dealt with through various formats of events, namely:

- seminars
- meetings
- workshops
- round tables.

Numerous countries of the MENA region and beyond, showed their interest towards the MENA-OECD Centre’s activities. Between 2013 and 2016, 37 countries (excluding Italy) were involved in the capacity building activities of the Centre, including almost all MENA countries of the Initiative.

**Figure 1. Sectors of intervention**



**Figure 2. Type of activity**

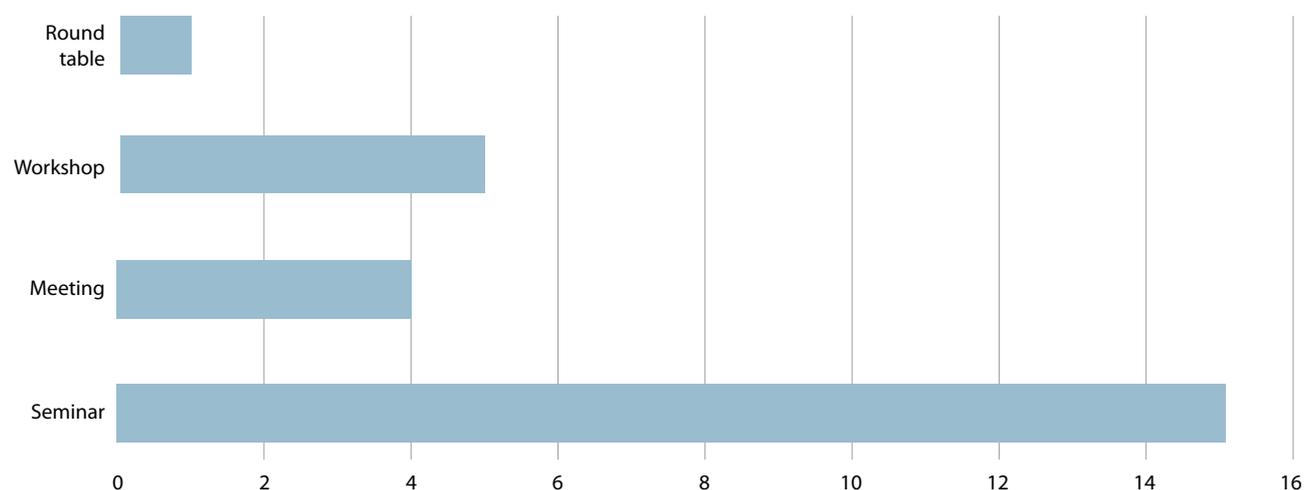
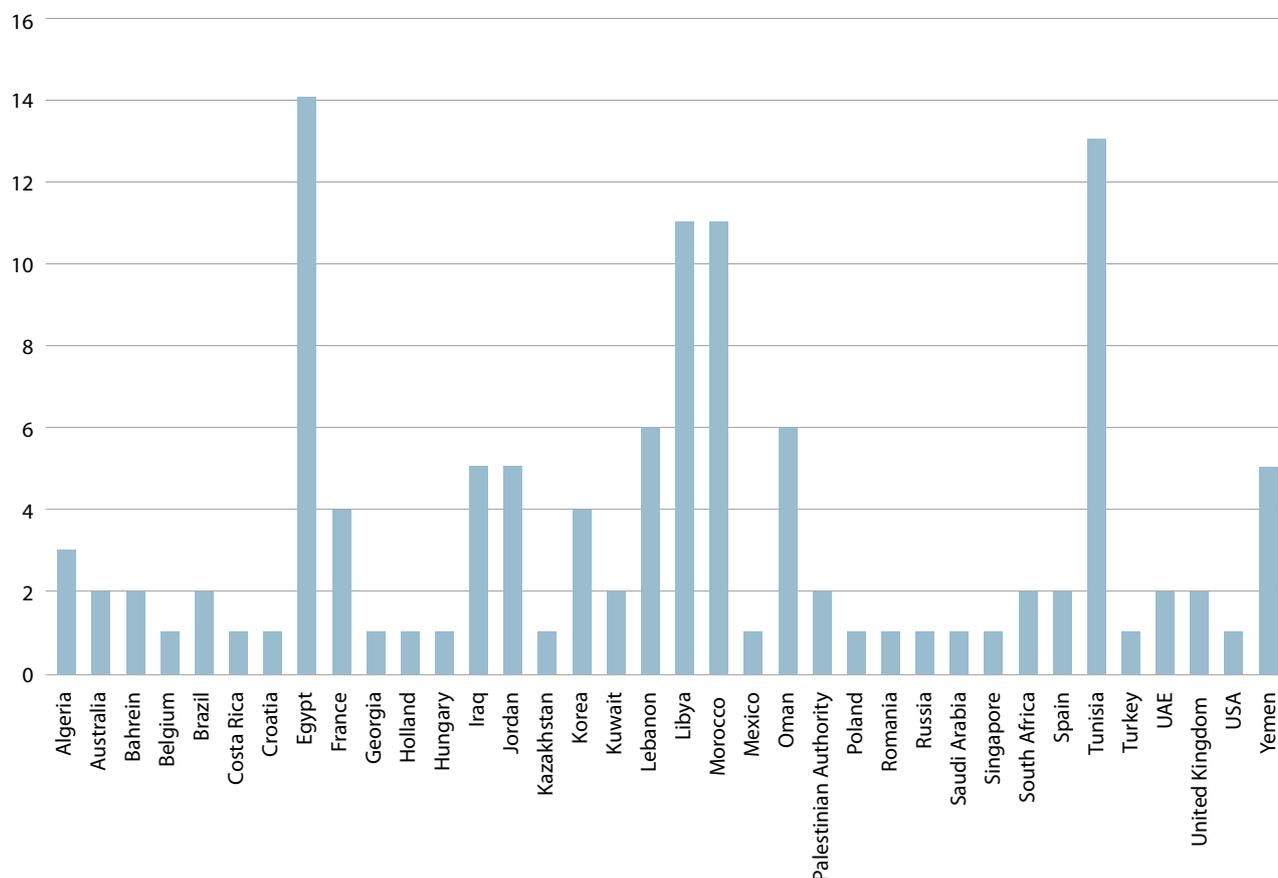


Figure 3. Countries involved in Mena-OECD Centre's initiatives



The countries that have been mostly involved in the events organized by the Centre were Egypt (14 times) and Tunisia (13 times); followed by:

- Libya and Morocco (11);
- Lebanon and Oman (6);
- Iraq, Jordan and Yemen (5);
- France and Korea (4);
- Algeria (3);
- Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Palestinian Authority, South Africa, Spain, UAE and United Kingdom (2);
- Belgium, Costa Rica, Croatia, Georgia, The Netherlands, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Turkey and USA (1).

The evaluation aimed to demonstrate in what measure the project has affected the preparation of the participants in the short, medium and long term and the level of efficiency of the capacity building activities.

## LEARNING

As already argued, in order to estimate the participants' rate of satisfaction at the end of the training sessions, the MENA-OECD Centre has carried out a research based on detailed tests which not only proved to be a rather efficient tool, but also showed positive feedback.

The test results were compared to pre-tests previously carried out by the participants in order to put on record different levels of initial knowledge and expertise.

The survey found a very positive response stating an improvement of knowledge in the training process.

As shown in figure 4, the assessment of pre-training and post-training tests, conducted on about 750 participants (nearly 50% of total participants), shows that 46% of them have significantly improved their knowledge; 47% have improved their knowledge and 7% have not improved their knowledge.

**EXAMPLE**

**Q:** Do you believe that this training has improved your knowledge in the field of ....?

**A:** Yes, significantly. // Yes, I do. // No, I do not.

In a scale between 1 and 5, in terms of effectiveness of the knowledge improvement, the above-mentioned 5 sectors of intervention have reported the following

- average ratings:
- public procurement (4,4)
- public finance management & budgeting (4,3)

- anticorruption (4,5)
- open government & e-government (4,2)
- human resources management (4,6).

The data shows that the Centre’s activities were successful in introducing public officials to key concepts of public governance and in particular to OECD best practices and concrete examples from peer countries. Enhanced knowledge about how the practical aspects of how to design and implement reforms are the basis to translate OECD policy recommendations into practice. The improvement of budget transparency in Tunisia or reflections on e-government policies in Libya were the results of these trainings.

Figure 4. Knowledge improvement after MENA-OECD Centre’s activities

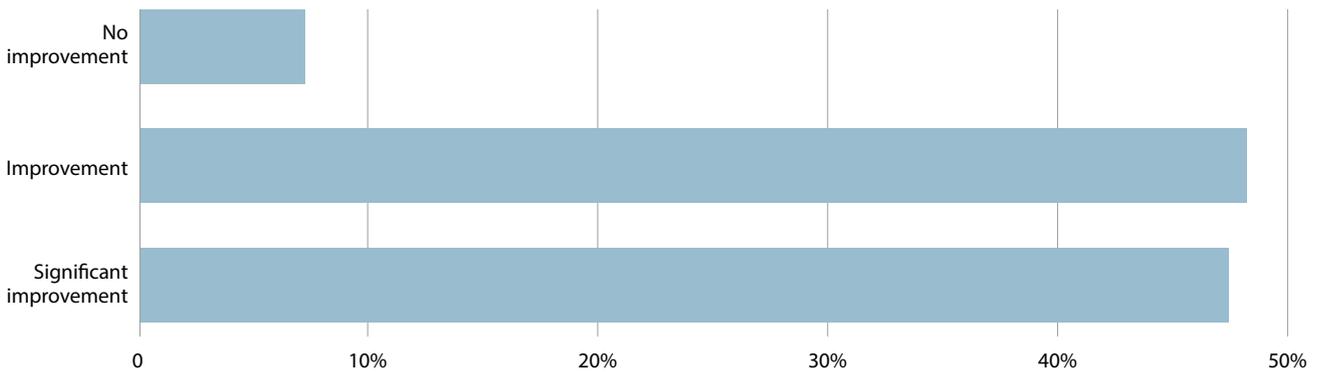
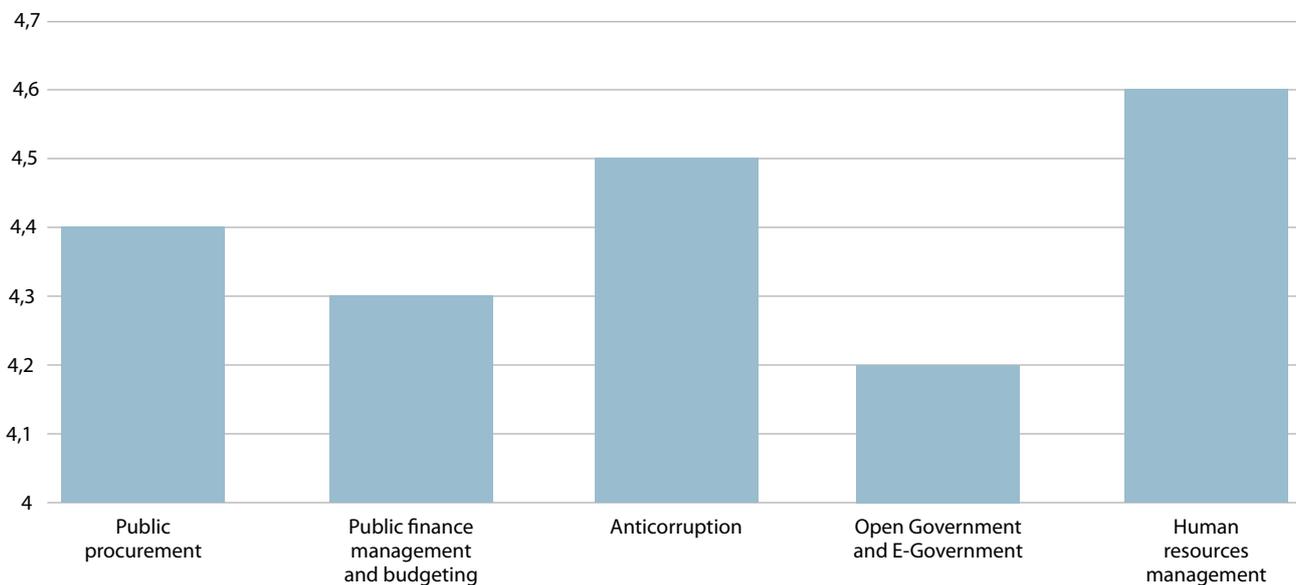


Figure 5. Average rating for sector of intervention



**AWARENESS**

A key-point of the MENA-OECD institutional action as a result of the capacity building events organized by the Centre, is certainly represented by the extraordinary opportunities of sharing evidence based knowledge, data and information on public policies issues, as well as an excellent opportunity for building and promoting bilateral and multilateral relations and networking.

As highlighted in the chart n. 6, 58% of the participants have established permanent relations with other colleagues, 29% have established occasional relations and 3% have not established relations with colleagues.

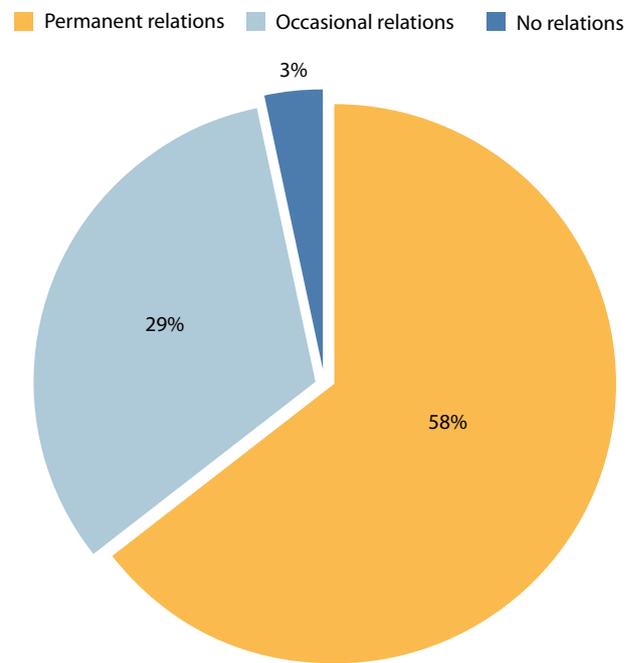
**EXAMPLE**

**Q:** Have you established relations with colleagues of the MENA-OECD Centre’s network?

**A:** Yes, I have established permanent relations. // Yes, I have established occasional relations. // No I have not established relations.

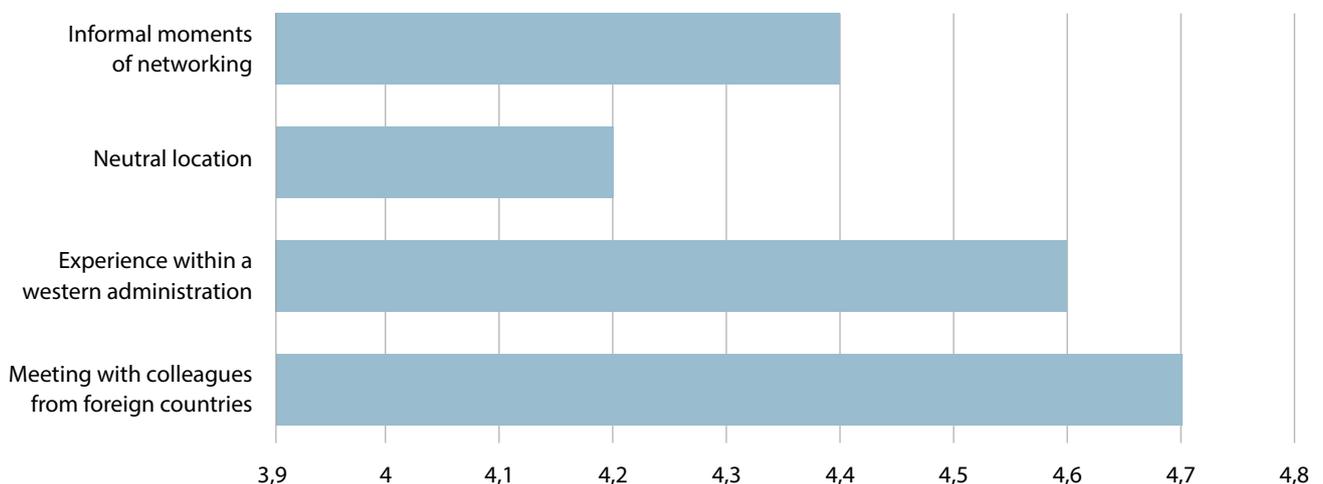
The importance of being part of an international network, was appreciated under several points of view. It is clear that the participants involved have developed a greater degree of awareness with regards to the competencies acquired during the training activities. Informal occasions have quickly become a means for sharing ideas and exchanging opinions – often in a very lively way – making it possible to have sundry and positive feedback.

**Figure 6. MENA-OECD participant’s network**



The strong interest of the participants, the importance of the issues explored, and the neutral location of the Centre have made it possible to create an environment of inclusiveness and cooperation among all the involved actors. Once the meeting sessions were over, the participants soon came to notice the improvements of their own skills such as organizational skills and time management.

**Figure 7. Participant’s awareness is related to:**



Moreover, the activities proved successful in creating relationships between different countries participating in the MENA-OECD Centre's capacity building activities, allowing them to take advantage of international networking and initiate exchanges of valuable knowledge and information, promoting a process of mutual support in areas such as transparency, budget expenditures and public procurement, so to bring the countries of the MENA region to achieve their sustainable development goals. OECD evidence actually shows that effective coordination and cooperation mechanisms are essential to implement public sector reforms. The trusting relationships that the Centre's activities were able to build among policy makers from the same country as well as among countries will be supportive to design and implement reforms in the respective countries.

On a scale between 1 and 5, the context conditions that have mainly influenced the participants' awareness with respect to the opportunities of a supranational network like the MENA-OECD Centre, are the following:

- Informal networking opportunities (4,4)
- Prestigious and neutral location (4,2)
- Experience within an OECD country public administration (4,6)
- Meeting with colleagues from foreign countries (4,7).

## BEHAVIOURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

In order to evaluate the efficiency of the activities carried out by the MENA-OECD Centre, in terms of impact on the participants' professional contexts, a broad survey was conducted, aiming to investigate to what extent the actors (specifically public managers and civil servants) would put in practice the information and expertise acquired during the training sessions and apply them to their own professional field. This kind of feedback is highly valuable for the proper functioning of the Centre, especially in the evaluation process of the capacity building activities of the Centre and in the search for new and innovative capacity building instruments in support of the implementation of the public sector reforms agenda.

As already underlined, it is clear that the training sessions and related activities have facilitated dialogue, dissemination of expertise and broader cooperation in the field of common issues linked to governance faced by the countries of the MENA region. Further expanding of the OECD network and its policies and strengthening

of the cooperation and exchange of experiences have encouraged mutual support and understanding, paving thus the way for more awareness and understanding of the needs of specific public institutions.

The surveys have proved that participants have been able to demonstrate through specific examples how the skills acquired during the training activities have improved their organizational skills, time allotment and capacity building management, in the various national contexts.

In general, the participants believe that the skills have been significantly improved or have been improved by the training activities.

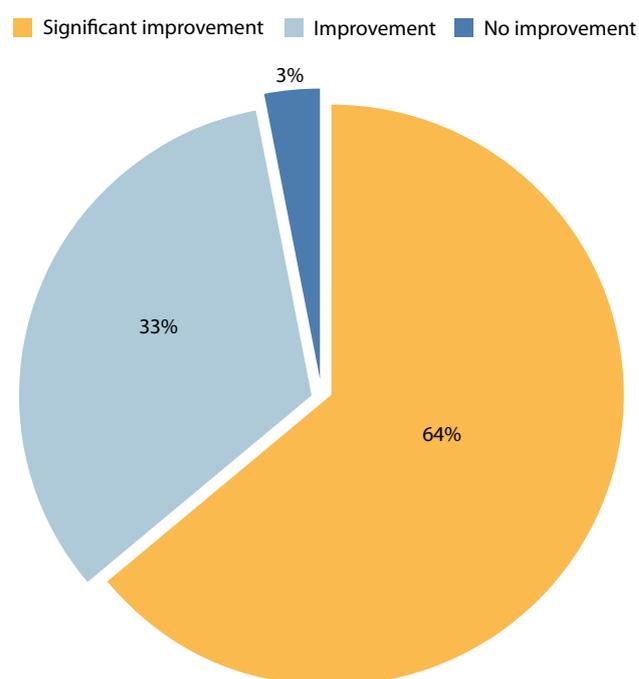
As highlighted in figure 8, 64% of trainees has received a significant improvement, 33% an improvement and only 3% has declared a lack of improvement.

**EXAMPLE**

**Q:** Do you believe that this training has improved your skills in the field of ....?

**A:** Yes, significantly. // Yes, I do. // No, I do not.

Figure 8. Skills improvement after MENA-OECD Centre's activities



For instance, considering the activities in the field of public finance management & budgeting, 72% of the respondents provided concrete examples showing that their readiness and competencies to contribute to public expenditure budgeting coordination had improved.

In relation to the behavioural change, and based on the evaluation from public managers, civil servants and participants in general, the soft skills that improved significantly are as follows ( in scale between 1 and 5):

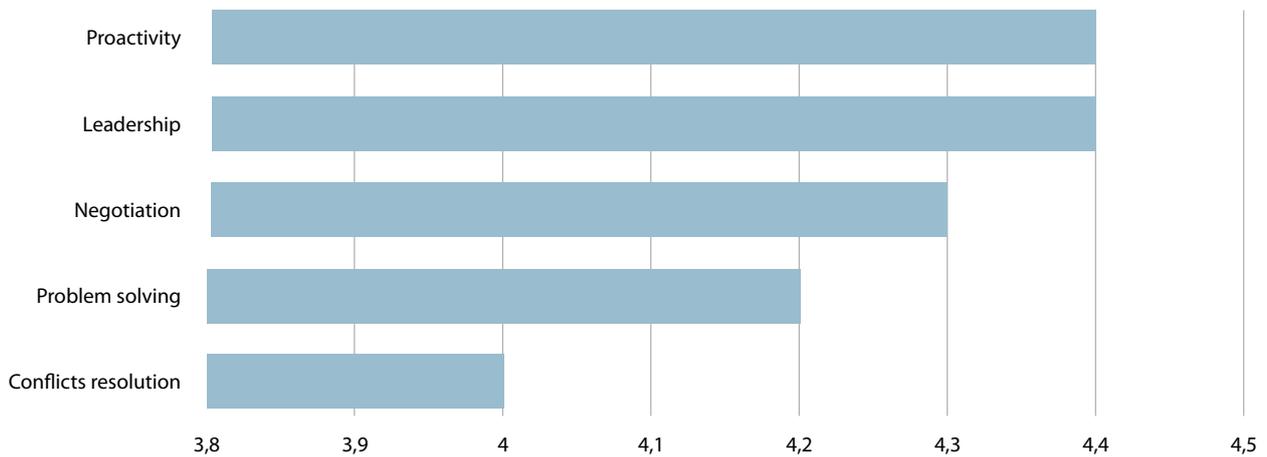
- conflicts resolution, with an average rate of 4,0;
- problem solving, with an average rate of 4,2;

- negotiation, with an average rate of 4,3
- leadership, with an average rate of 4,4
- proactivity, with an average rate of 4,4.

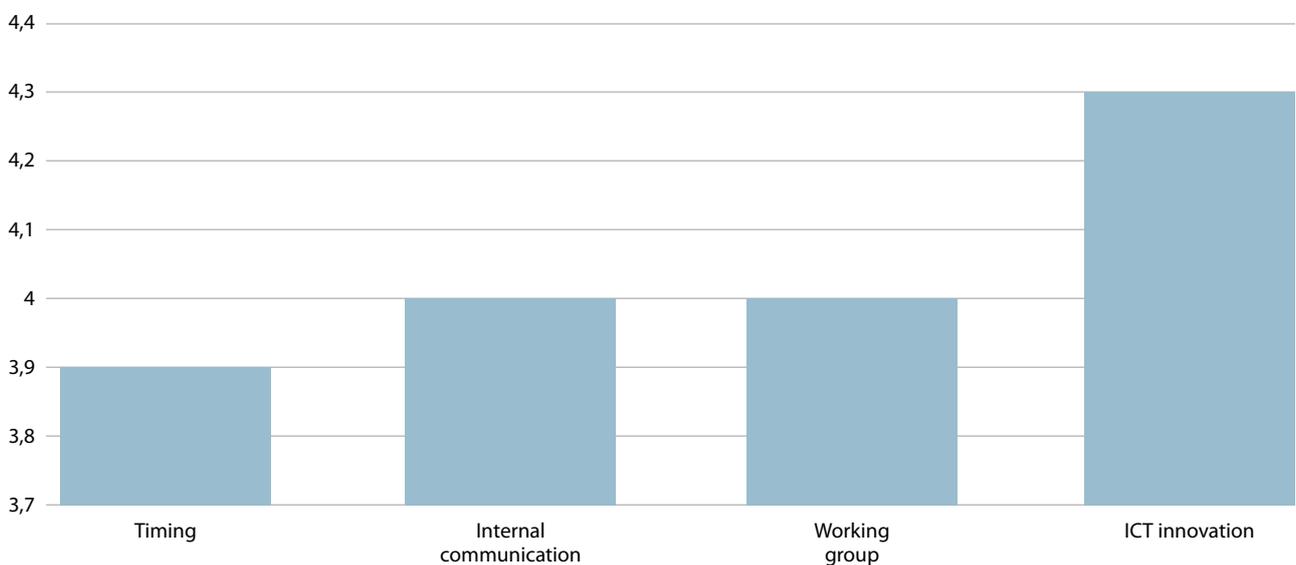
Regarding the organizational change, the fields in which the professional context was mostly enhanced are:

- timing (3,9)
- internal communication (4,0)
- working group (4,1)
- ICT innovation (4,3)

**Figure 9. Behavioural change is related to:**



**Figure 10. Organisational change is related to:**



## QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In the first part of the qualitative assessment, the report uses the criterion of “compliance”, in relation to the legal-institutional framework of MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre’s initiatives, represented by the Memorandum of Understanding between SNA and OECD, signed in 2013.

The Memorandum enshrines valuable considerations on the institutional opportunities related to the MENA-OECD Centre, as well as general purposes of cooperation between the OECD and the Italian Government. Getting into further detail, it can be observed that the Centre has complied with the standards set by the Memorandum.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the OECD and the SNA aims at shaping the debate on a strategic issue concerning public sector reform, challenges and goals of the public administration, at both national and international level.

Its work is focused on seven strategic areas: reform of the civil services and public management; transparency, integrity and fighting corruption; technological innovation and e-government; public finance; fiscal federalism; public procurement and acquisitions; European and international affairs.

Comparing the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre’s activities with the most important MOU’s provisions, the outcomes are as follows:

The Article 1.1, provided that

*“the purpose of this MOU is the establishment of a joint training centre based in the Royal Palace of Caserta (...) to provide capacity building activities and training to senior civil servants from Arab countries, in order to enhance good governance reforms in the Mena region, and to promote policy dialogue between Mena and OECD countries”.*

It can be said that the Centre’s activities were compliant with this provision. They were always organized at its institutional place, with a balance between capacity building and training events and, as better highlighted in the following section (institutional framework), with a strong attention to the governance and public sector reforms and the governments’ priorities of the MENA Region.

Moreover, as underlined in the quantitative assessment (sub-section “awareness”), not only the OECD outreach but also policy dialogue between MENA and OECD countries has been certainly improved, thanks to the Centre’s activities. The Article 1.2, established that

*“the implementation of joint activities (...) shall take place (...) within the context of the Mena-OECD Governance Programme and of the Action Plan on Open Governance and Anticorruption of the Deauville Partnership for Arab countries in transition (Governance Pillar)”.*

As better reported in the following section, all activities were tailored to the key areas of the Governance Programme and, more in general, to the strategic cooperation’s issues between OECD and MENA countries, such as open government and anti-corruption. Regarding the provision of the article 1.3, according to which

*“any activity (...) is subject to its inclusion in the Parties respective programmes of work and budget and shall be carried out in accordance with the Parties’ respective rules and practices (...)”.*

It can be said that each initiative was planned and designed in a framework of close cooperation between SNA and OECD, on one hand, and with the countries’ beneficiaries, on the other hand. The activities of the Centre refer to joint bilateral agreements, where both parties undertake to respect the fundamental criteria stipulated by the MOU as the timing, the topics, the role of all countries involved, the objectives and the budget. The article 2.1 identified the following list (not limited) of thematic areas:

- a. Strategic planning;
- b. Open and inclusive policy making;
- c. Public procurement and public-private partnerships;
- d. Government use of information and communication technology
- e. Regulatory policy and reform
- f. Human resources management
- g. Innovation in service delivery
- h. Territorial development
- i. Integrity policies
- j. E-government
- k. Administrative simplifications

The section dedicated to the “quantitative assessment” shows that the activities of the Centre of Caserta can be regrouped in five macro-sectors of intervention: Human Resources Management, Open Government & E-Government, Anti-corruption, Public Finance Management & Budgeting, Public Procurement. A joint reading of article 2.1 and the data related to the sectors of intervention demonstrates a significant compliance. In particular, the areas b, d, g and j are part of “open government & e-government”. Fields like “strategic planning”, “regulatory policy and reform” and “territorial development” were covered with the inter-disciplinary approach of the sector of intervention called “public finance management & budgeting”. The areas c and k were addressed through the activities included in the “public procurement” sector.

The categories “*human resources management*” and “*integrity policies*”, were treated in the events related to the sectors of intervention called, respectively, “human resources management” and “anticorruption”. All these areas are tackled more specifically, with the above mentioned positive implications within the national administrations.

This analysis can be completed with a consideration concerning the provisions of the articles 2.2.

Referring to the main goals established by article 2.2. (“*development and delivery of training courses and capacity building*” and “*knowledge sharing and dissemination events*”), the data related to the number of the initiatives (table 1), the type of the activities (figure 2) and the learning and awareness outcomes (figures 4, 5, 6, 7), show that the provision was widely satisfied.

The vision of the Centre aims not only at developing knowledge, but also at promoting sharing and dissemination of knowledge among the participants, in order to enact an interdisciplinary approach that allows participants of the Centre’s activities to create a network and gain deeper awareness of the opportunities related to this kind of experiences. In doing so, the Centre fully complies with the main objectives of the MOU.

In conclusion, this first qualitative evaluation shows a high “rate” of compliance of the capacity building activities of the Mena-OECD Governance Programme Centre with the legal and institutional formal commitments made by the parties.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

As already pointed out, the second field of the qualitative assessment consists of the category of compliance that respects the institutional framework of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre. This framework is represented by a series of strategic documents and reports, developed by OECD and MENA countries, before and during the institutional activity of the MENA-OECD Centre, such as those of the annual Steering Group Meetings, of the Ministerial Declarations, the mandate extensions as well as strategic guidance of the Working Groups.

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. The key areas of intervention are six (with several sub-sectors for each of them), as reported in the following image:

Referring to the first key area, “*open government*”, we can observe that the quantitative assessment highlights a strong and systematic attention of the MENA-OECD Centre towards this topic. As reported in figure 1, issues related to open government and e-government were addressed for 12 times.

In particular, and in relation to the sub-sector “*open and inclusive policy making, citizen participation*”, several capacity building and networking events were organized by the Centre, on “*the role of open data in the open government policies*”; “*the principles and effective measures for the promotion of transparency in public administrations, through the active participation of citizens, civil society and business*”; “*the importance of open government for a business-friendly public administration*”; “*the ICT innovation and citizens’ participation in the decision making process*”, etc.

Moreover, other two important initiatives were held specifically on this issue, the “*Annual Meeting of global network of the Schools and Institutes of Public Administration on Open Government*”, strongly promoted by the Centre (with a participation of 23 countries) and the “*Round Table event on public governance and the role of the citizens in shaping the open government dialogue*” (co-chaired by ARADO).

With reference to the sub-sector “*digital government and innovation in the public sector*” (in addition to the above highlighted initiatives), the seminars on “*dissemination of guidelines of the OECD on technology ICT in promoting of*

## FOCUS ON SIX KEY AREAS

### Open government

- Open and inclusive policy making, citizen participation
- Digital government and innovation in the public sector
- Public sector integrity and anti-corruption frameworks

### Rule of Law

- Performance of justice institutions
- People-focused access to justice services

### Local governance

- Reform to reduce disparities between territories and citizens
- Institutional capacity building at the (sub-)national level
- Local development based on policy recommendations

### Efficient machinery of government

- Efficient and effective budgeting and expenditure frameworks
- Regulatory reform and administrative simplification
- Peer dialogue between senior budget officials and procurement leaders

### Gender equality

- Institutional frameworks for gender equality
- Delivery of gender sensitive policies and legislation
- Women's equal participation in public decision making
- Gender equality in public sector employment

### Youth engagement

- Support the process of formulating and implementing national youth policies
- Scale up the institutional and legal framework for youth engagement
- Promote innovative forms of engaging youth to mainstream their concerns in public policies and service delivery

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transparency and accountability of anticorruption measures on different levels of government” and on “different instruments to implement innovative systems of e-procurement” should be mentioned.

The third sub-sector, devoted to “public sector integrity and anti-corruption frameworks”, was significantly taken in consideration in the training activities, as displayed by the “Regional Workshop for the promotion of transparency and accountability” (in cooperation with the World Bank); by a seminar called “Fight against corruption, transparency and integrity” (as provided by the bilateral agreement between the Italian Government, the Ministry of Labour and the National Institute of Management of Libya); a seminars cycle on integrity, procurement, anticorruption, with a “dissemination of useful instruments aimed at implementation of best practices on integrity in central and local administrations” and a “dissemination of specific anticorruption organizational instruments”.

Moreover, considering the second key area, “efficient machinery of government”, we can state that the MENA-OECD Training Centre showed a significant interest.

For instance, at least six activities can be clearly traced to the first sub-sector, “efficient and effective budgeting and expenditure frameworks”, highlighting for instance a workshop on “transparency in fiscal issues related with good fiscal performance and budgeting” (specifically addressed to senior level managers from Ministries of Finance of several MENA countries).

Numerous seminars were organized in the field of public finance management, with the objective to share experiences and expertise of MENA countries, encouraging the acquisition of appropriate strategic and practical tools, and accompanying the ongoing democratic process in the area.

The second sub-sector, “regulatory reform and administrative simplification”, was enhanced through specific training experiences in which, as an example, the administrative efforts to support SME's development, and in particular to regulate the system of public-private partnership or the role of the ICT innovation in the organizational simplification of a public administration, were studied and analyzed.

The last sub-sector, “*peer dialogue between senior budget official and procurement leaders*”, was enriched through a joint discussion and exchange of experiences in public finance management and on budgeting and public procurement issues.

Equally consistent was the attention of the Caserta’s Centre in respect of another key area of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, namely the “*local governance*”.

In addition to initiatives specifically targeting managers and officials from local administrations, such as seminars on the improvement of public budgeting capabilities in the local government, almost all the initiatives organized by the MENA-OECD Centre were distinguished by a strong presence of senior managers and officials at local level of government, and designed to an in-depth analysis of local governance implications of the issues addressed.

Referring to the third sub-sector (“*local development based on policy recommendations*”), for instance, the capacity building’s activities on strategic planning, useful for practical skills enhancement of project development and project management, were highly appreciated.

Even if less addressed as training topics, additional three key areas of MENA-OECD Governance Programme (*rule of law, gender equality, youth engagement*) were in any case considered and partially implemented.

It can be said that, even if they were not formally treated as the main “topic” of the training activities, they were included and further stressed, for instance in initiatives related to open government and citizens participation (gender quality), or in issues concerning e-government and ICT innovation (youth engagement), or in activities on public procurement and administrative law (rule of law).

A deep attention, moreover, was reserved to the internal distribution of the trainees, with a continuous effort in the direction of a gender balance and of a youth presence. The above mentioned joint reading shows, therefore, a high “rate” of compliance of the activities of the Caserta’s Centre with the institutional and outreach framework represented by the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.

Another important institutional framework is represented by the “Marrakech declaration” and the “Tunis declaration”, adopted on the occasion of the MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference of 2016.

With regards, in particular, to the orientations for the implementation of the MENA-OECD Initiative, recommendations from the Working Groups and the provisions specifically directed to the Governance Programme, the following results may be observed.

The first political priority was “(the parties) *mandate the Programme to pursue and expand its activities in support of Public Governance Reform, including: a. the use of the Joint Learning Studies mechanisms as an effective tool for policy reform through peer advice; b. the reinforcement of the regional centers of training and expertise as a mechanism to promote capacity building and regional integration; c. the use of policy dialogue as a mechanism for regional collaboration and support to national reforms; d. the use of e-learning tools and programmes; e. the coordination with specialized regional networks, including but not limited to the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)*”.

Concerning the points a and c, the peer to peer approach was constantly adopted in the events organization with, already highlighted, positive outcomes in terms of sharing of experiences of legislative reforms and of establishment of relations between managers and officials from different countries. The goal b was certainly achieved through the institution of the Centre, which has become a key stakeholder in the system of training of all the countries involved.

Even the orientations indicated in the letter d and e were positively faced, in line with the training field of interventions and the specialized network of the MENA-OECD system, and with a profitable use of the e-learning know-how of the SNA.

The second provision stated that “(the parties) *endorse the Regional Charter for Quality in Regulation in view of contributing to an enabling regulatory environment promoting sustainable economic growth in MENA Countries. Ministers look forward to joint activities to support implementation and a future report on achievements in this domain*”.

Even if it was not expressly treated, the better regulations tools were often part of a common discussion, especially in the training events devoted to issues as strategic planning, business-friendly public administration, etc.

With reference to the third priority (“(the parties) *mandate the Programme to further promote the use of electronic government solutions and reforms as an effective tool for transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and transformation*”.

of public sectors and their service provisions in the interest of both citizens and businesses”) and the tenth priority (“the parties underline that citizen participation and inclusion of civil society organisations constitute a strategic option to overcoming public governance challenges”), it can be said that, as already underlined in this document, the importance of e-government tools, and their implications in terms of transparency, integrity, citizens participation, public finance management etc., were strongly promoted in the period under consideration.

It can be noticed, therefore, that a relevant part of the Ministerial declarations’ provisions (especially those that are directly attributable to the Centre’s institutional mission) were successfully implemented. Moreover, taking into consideration the second institutional framework, the outcomes of this type of evaluation demonstrate a good “rate” of compliance.

In conclusion, and in relation to the overall qualitative assessment, it is clear that the MENA-OECD Governance Programme Centre’s activities have provided to be deeply in line with the bilateral and multilateral agreements and with institutional frameworks, developed by OECD and by MENA countries in the past years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Governments and institutions of the whole MENA region have been undergoing deep and fast structural changes in recent years. Their governments are struggling to engage citizens and respond to their public service needs, while boosting growth and fighting inequalities and poverty.

The Centre, as a useful tool in fostering more efficient and effective public policies, should comply with the outcomes of the 2016 Ministerial Declaration of Tunis which establishes clear goals and challenges for the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and recommends to integrate growing countries’ demand for capacity building into Centre’s strategic objectives. From the contents point of view, besides continuing in reaching beyond the above results, the Centre should extend and/or add additional value to such strategic topics as gender equality and women’s participation in policy making and parliament; youth engagement; civil service engagement and leadership as well as local development.

It is also advisable that the Centre, as a member of the OECD Network of the Schools of Government, seizes the huge advantage of the value added in the capacity building contents and tools provided by this highly regarded global network.



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