



Economic Development and Integration Division Economic Governance and Planning Section

1st Regional Meeting of DA Project Focal Points

on 13 and 14 September 2018 at UNESCWA in Beirut (Lebanon)

Concept Outline

In most Arab countries, there exists a body responsible for setting national plans but with very little strategy or policy options to achieve planned targets considering lack of integration across national priorities and broad national commitment to ensure implementation and sustainability of the plans. To reformulate the concept of development planning to increase its applicability and improve its chances of success, it is imperative to look more closely at the structuring of the planning process and the weak link between targets and their realization. Integrated, strategic and better-coordinated development planning, combined with strengthened economic governance, will contribute towards putting the countries in the region on a more inclusive development trajectory toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The development account project was designed to address these challenges by first introducing the concept of integrative planning and presenting to member states why it is a more suitable framework in today's challenging development landscape. A vital part of this stage is to gather information on the process through which national plans are created, as well as to construct a database of existing national development plans to ensure co-learning by national planning institutions. The second stage aims to reorient planning institutions in some selected member States to adopt this new concept. An essential component of this stage is conducting training and capacity building workshops to demonstrate how integrative planning concepts can be used effectively to achieve national objectives, as well as to integrate the SDGs into the individual national plans.

Objectives of the meeting include, for example:

- Discuss current national development planning approaches in the Arab region to identify lessons learned.
- Mindful of the requirements related to the implementation of the Agenda 2030, to identify specific capacity gaps to be addressed effectively and collaboratively;
- To agree on an implementation road map based on a feasible timeline for the project and ensure clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the focal points in support of project implementation.

For additional information or questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Draft Agenda

Day 1

8:30	-	09:00	Arrival and registration
09:00	-	09:30	Welcome & Opening Session of the Regional Meeting of Focal Points <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Mohamed El-Hacene, Director, EDID, UNESCWA
09:30	-	11:00	Session 1: Setting the stage <p>Introduction to the development account project and explanation of the terms of references of the national project focal points. The session will also discuss national development planning experiences from other regions (e.g. Latin-America and the Caribbean), whose lessons learned for a collaborative regional approach (e.g. Planobarometro) can inform the Arab initiative.</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Denise Sumpf, UNESCWA
11:00	-	11:30	Coffee break
11:30	-	13:00	Session 2: ESCWA national plans database and guidelines on good planning <p>The session will brief the participants on ESCWA's preparatory research and analysis on the status quo of national development planning approaches in the Arab region. Participants will also learn about UNESCWA's national plans database as a collaborative tool to identify commonalities, interlinkages and approaches to resolve challenges.</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Nathalie Grand, UNESCWA
13:00	-	14:00	Lunch
14:00	-	15:45	Working Group 1: Current national development planning approaches – Opportunities and challenges <p>Format: Break-out session</p> <p>Discussion on opportunities and challenges experienced in previous and current national development exercises to identify lessons learned awareness and engagement of national stakeholders (e.g. policy-makers from difference Ministries, decision-making procedures).</p>
15:45	-	16:30	Working Group Presentations Day 1 <p>The individual working groups present their intermediate discussion results.</p>

Day 2

09:00	-	10:30	Session 3: Integrating behavioural insights for effective national development planning <p>The discussion introduces participants to the importance of applying behavioural insights to the policy challenges that the Arab region faces and of using experimental approaches as well as behavioural economics tools (e.g. randomized controlled trials. The application of behavioural science to a variety of public policy settings is aimed at improving citizen-centered policies and at improving the quality of policy choices at the national level.</p>
10:30	-	11:00	Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:30	Working Group 2: Stakeholder engagement The discussion focuses on how to partner within the government and beyond (e.g. private sector, academia, civil society) for national development planning initiatives. What worked well, what did not and how can balanced engagement and ownership be established.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 14:30	Working Group Presentations Day 2: Final presentations The individual working groups present their consolidated discussion results.
14:30 - 15:30	Session 4: A path towards the future – Mapping the implementation of the development account project Discuss and agree on the next steps towards implementation of the project and will clearly define activities to be undertaken between August 2018 and February 2019 <i>Moderation:</i> Ms. Denise Sumpf, UNESCWA
15:30 - 16:00	Conclusions & Closing Mr. Mohamed El-Hacene, Director, EDID, UNESCWA

TORs

Terms of reference for National Focal Points supporting the Development Account Project “Towards the Arab Horizon 2030: Enhancing Integrated National Development Planning in the Arab Region”

In April 2018, UNESCWA Member States were encouraged to nominate national focal points for the above-mentioned project to facilitate coordination, information sharing and joint planning of activities at the national and regional level. In most cases this person is from a government ministry involved in national development planning.

In this capacity, a national focal point, either himself or herself or with the support of staff:

- Serves as liaison between UNESCWA’s Economic Governance and Planning Section (the “Project Secretariat”) and national development planning bodies, as appropriate
- Shares information on project-related programmes, activities, materials and events with the project secretariat
- Ensures that the country engages in integrated national development and shares relevant information, documents, and material with the project secretariat
- Supports outreach to potential partners (e.g. public sector, private sector, academia) to encourage contributions to the project, as necessary;
- Supports the project secretariat in all aspects related to the implementation of specific activities outlined in the project document, including logistics and administrative support for the organization of field visits, meetings, seminars and/or national workshops
- Ensures that the country contributes to the national development planning database and related tools;
- Participates and substantively contributes to regional meetings, national workshops, seminars and field visits;
- Provides input and feedback to the regular reports on the progress of the development account project
- Communicates regularly with constituents and stakeholders as well as supports communication on and dissemination of project results
- Supports the project secretariat in all other functions related to the effective and cooperative implementation of the development account, as per mandate.
