

THE NETWORK SPEAKS

Working Together to improve public service delivery

The [MENA Network of Public Procurement Experts](#) represents a landmark achievement in the regional effort to help countries assist one another in strengthening their public procurement systems. Established in June 2013, the Network is composed of government-nominated representatives, responsible for leading public procurement in nine MENA countries – Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, and Yemen. The World Bank’s MENA Procurement Team has been critical to the birth and development of this initiative, under the leadership of Regional Procurement Manager Yolanda Tayler and the guidance of Director of Strategy and Operations Gerard Byam.

The Network has endorsed three priority areas for regional collaboration: the development of capacity in the procurement workforce; the modernization of procurement tools; and, the improvement of business opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement. **The goals and objectives of each activity, along with important benefits that will be brought to the region through their implementation, are articulated below by representatives of the Network countries leading these efforts.**



Mr. Abdellatif Jari is a representative of the Government of Morocco, which is leading the Subcommittee on the Modernization of

Procurement Tools. He is the Head of the Department of e-Procurement System in the General Treasury of the Kingdom of Morocco.



Mr. Tarek El-Salem, a member of the Procurement Capacity Building Initiative, is the Senior Training Manager at the Arab Administrative

Development Organization (ARADO) of the Arab League. He is based in Cairo, Egypt.



Mr. Karim Chabir is the Deputy Chief in the Tunisian High Tender Board. He is a representative of the Government of Tunisia which is leading the new

Network Subcommittee on Creating Business Opportunities for SMEs in Public Procurement.



Mr. Jean Elieh (left), is the Director General of the Central Tender Board of Lebanon. He is joined in representing Lebanon in the Network by **Judge Elie Maalouf (right)** of the Court of Accounts in Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon is serving as the interim Network Secretariat.

Why is the work of your sub-committee needed for the Network, for the region and for your country? What direct and indirect benefits do you believe your subcommittees' work will provide to these groups? What existing challenges will this work address?

“The workshop in Tunis was a great chance to tackle an important, often-neglected issue that most MENA region countries suffer from - the lack of a unified practice in the field of public procurement and the urgent need for capacity building. The impact of the capacity building subcommittee is both direct and indirect. It is direct in that it will create a training program in the field of Public procurement that will enhance the procurement workforce’s knowledge about best practices. It will also introduce Training-of-Trainer programs to create a pool of trainers in the MENA region countries that will ensure the continuity of flow of training in the region. The subcommittee will have the indirect impact of enriching the field of Public procurement, and making it an attractive profession for talented people in both the public and private sector. “

Mr. Tarek El-Salem

“The work of the **SME subcommittee** is important for the Network in the sense that this subcommittee will act as a primary point of contact between procurement professionals in the MENA region and the private sector. This work will be very beneficial for the region in that it will promote a more participatory and more concerted action-oriented approach towards dialogue between the private and public sectors, rather than a one-sided conversation. In the case of our country of Tunisia, dialogue with SMEs and mentoring to increase their participation in government contracting will strengthen the development and quality orientation of SMEs, which represent a substantial percentage of the country's economy. The actions of our subcommittee therefore are very important: better-fit procedures for the award and implementation of government contracts, remedies and administrative shortcuts that will help SMEs to **control costs, optimize their recruitment** and to **better identify the opportunities** and contracts that are most **compatible with their abilities.**”

Mr. Karim Chabir

“The implementation of regional public procurement platform is an ambitious project with a regional dimension. It is essential to combine the efforts of all the countries in the region to ensure the success of this initiative. The implementation of the regional public procurement platform will bring direct gains to the various actors involved in the field of public procurement. Among other functions, the regional platform will enable, **at the strategic level:** To accelerate the pace of reforms in public procurement while reducing their costs; to contribute to unify practices among the network members; and to strengthen the management capacity of the network members. **At the operational level,** the regional platform will facilitate access to collective knowledge and exchange of best practices regarding regulations and management of public procurement; facilitate social networking between the members of the network, and catalyze learning needs of the members of the network.”

Mr. Abdellatif Jari

“As host of the Network’s Secretariat function, our role is to develop ideas and produce the tasks and suggestions and then present them to the Network for approval and then follow-up for implementation. For our country, it is critical to take advantage of the work that has already been accomplished, to facilitate the transfer of ideas and developments, and then to follow up on the practical implementation within the country.”

Mr. Jean Ellieh
Judge Elie Maalouf

In your view, has the Network already made an impact? In what way(s)?

“The Network already made a positive impact by bringing together the relevant bodies, setting the action plans and meetings, and gathering findings and ideas. Through all of these achievements, the Network will provide its optimum impact.”

Mr. Tarek El-Salem

“The Network and its work have had a strong impact so far: the **exchange** of experiences and best practices in procurement between professionals from different countries of the MENA region; the **connection** with other professionals and other experiences from around the world; and the **identification** of concerted action plans in each subcommittee, which are composed of representatives of all member countries, are all elements that highlight the strength of the Network and its impact. This impact will become even more powerful once we ensure the continuity and sustainability of the work of the subcommittees, including deadlines, a regularity of exchanges between experts, and the continued support of the World Bank.”

Mr. Karim Chabir

“The work of the Network has already had a strong impact on the exchange of experiences and developments between Member States. The Network has fostered healthy competition among the countries involved, and encouraged them to achieve the best in each of its different components. We must look to the best practices at all levels, including training and capacity building, without repeating experiences of low quality.”

Mr. Jean Ellieh
Judge Elie Maalouf

“The establishment of the network has had a positive impact, helping us to pool efforts among countries in the MENA region and to promote convergence of national systems and practices of public procurement. We all understand that "Alone we can go faster, but together we will go further.”

Mr. Abdellatif Jari