

ESCWA

Regional Workshop on A Social Expenditure Monitor Framework for the Arab States (A Joint project by EDID/SD/SDD) 24-25 June 2019, ESCWA (Committee Room 1), Beirut, Lebanon

Context

The ability to target public expenditure in accord with social development priorities and macro-fiscal sustainability remains a challenge for most governments of the region today. Absence of a comprehensive public social expenditure monitor often results in inefficiency in budget allocation to support multiple and overlapping social programs or policies and the allocations often mis-match or they are inadequate to meeting the needs toward achieving the SDGs. Given the pressure on public budgets across countries in the region, continuing with such expenditure management tends to be unsustainable.

A comprehensive monitoring of public social expenditure would improve allocative efficiency and effectiveness of budgeting as well as it will be an enabling tool to rationalize expenditure components toward achieving different objectives, including delivering quality public services and “social investments” that promote inclusive development, social stability, enhance economic growth and revenues over time. A right mix of expenditure is important to drive the economy and society toward achieving the SDGs, not just higher levels of social expenditure, as emphasized in the ESCWA report (2017) on *Rethinking Fiscal Policy for the Arab Region*.

Following keen interests from Member States about assessing social expenditure in a more comprehensive way, ESCWA is supporting their efforts to establish a “*Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM): An Integrated Framework for Supporting Macro-Fiscal Policies and the SDGs*”. It is a joint project between EDID/SD/SDD, coordinated by EDID. Under the technical assistance program (RPTC), the activity is initiated as a pilot project in Jordan and Tunisia. Discussions are undergoing to implement the project in Kuwait and Palestine.

Workshop Objectives

The primary objectives of the workshop are:

- To review the social expenditure monitor draft, developed by ESCWA, and provide feedback on dimensions, indicators and design of the framework on social expenditure with a focus on tailoring it to national contexts.
- To agree on next steps toward implementing the SEM to national contexts, including collaboration with national partners.

Language of the Workshop

Arabic and English (with simultaneous translation)

Draft Agenda

Workshop on Social Expenditure Monitor for the Arab States	
Day 1	
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival and registration
9.00 – 9.30	<p>Welcome and opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA • Moctar Mohamed El Hacene, Director, Economic Development and Integration Division (EDID), ESCWA • Frederico Neto, Director, Social Development Division (SDD), ESCWA • Juraj Riecan, Director, Statistics Division (SD), ESCWA
9.30 – 11.00	<p>Session 1: Setting the Stage</p> <p><i>The session aims to provide an overview of the concept and ESCWA framework of Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM), its usefulness and application to potential budget reforms in the context of improving allocative efficiency and effectiveness of budgeting toward achieving the SDGs.</i></p> <p>Moderator: UNRC, Tunisia (TBC)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCWA SEM Team – ESCWA Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM) framework for the Arab States • Jordan – National coordinator, SEM project • Tunisia – National coordinator, SEM project • Kuwait – KISR • Palestine – MoSD <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion from the floor
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 – 1.00	<p>Session 2: Lessons learned in measuring social expenditure</p> <p><i>The session aims to present to the audience different experiences of social expenditure monitor practiced around the world, particularly that for the Latin American Countries and for the OECD. The session will draw lessons to improve the SEM indicators framework and its linkages to the SDGs.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Society for International Development (TBC)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECLAC – Lessons from Latin American measure of social expenditure panorama • OECD – Lessons from OECD measure of social expenditure

	<p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of Statistics departments (Jordan, Kuwait and Tunisia) • ESCWA SD
1.00 – 2.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
2.00 – 3.30	<p>Session 3: Issues and indicators for measuring social expenditure on education, health, employment programs and social protection</p> <p><i>This session aims to present the important issues and indicators for measuring social expenditure in the dimensions related to education, health, and social protection. It will benefit from the presentation of the national representatives on social protection or social policies frameworks and programs in national context.</i></p> <p>Moderator: ESCWA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Social Affairs (Tunisia) – Social policy/social protection policies/programs/strategy • Social Studies Division/ NAF (Jordan) – Social policy/social protection policies/programs/strategy • ESCWA SEM team – Presentation of the indicators, mapping of the issues and questionnaire related to the dimensions <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health (Jordan, Tunisia) • Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood (Tunisia) • ESCWA ECW
3.30 – 3.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
3.45 – 5.00	<p>Continue with Session 3: Focus group discussion</p> <p><i>This session aims to have a focused discussion on reviewing the indicators of the SEM on related dimensions for Jordan and Tunisia respectively, suggest modifications to the indicators and to the questionnaire if any; and close of day 1.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate FGD on Jordan, Tunisia, Kuwait and Palestine
Day 2	
9:00 – 11:00	<p>Session 4: Review of indicators under dimensions housing, culture and sports, and environment</p> <p><i>This session aims to present the important issues and indicators for measuring social expenditure in the dimensions related to housing, culture and sports and environment. It will benefit from the presentation of the national representatives on policies and programs on these issues in national context.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Director, AITRS</p> <p>Speakers:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Planning (Jordan) – Social policies and programs linked to environment and housing • Ministry of Equipment and Habitat (Tunisia) – Social policies and programs linked to equipment and habitat issues • ESCWA SDPD – Policies and programs linked to agriculture and food security • ESCWA SEM team – Presentation of the indicators, mapping of the issues and questionnaire related to the dimensions <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Hashemite Court (Jordan) • CRES (Tunisia) • UNESCO
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 – 1.00	<p>Continue with Session 4: Focus group discussion</p> <p><i>This session aims to have a focused discussion on reviewing the indicators of the SEM on related dimensions for Jordan and Tunisia respectively, suggest modifications to the indicators and to the questionnaire if any.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate FGD on Jordan, Tunisia, Kuwait and Palestine
1.00 – 2.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
2.00 – 3.30	<p>Session 5: SEM and its linkages to inclusive budgeting for SDGs</p> <p><i>The session aims to discuss the tools to analyse linkages between SEM and budgeting (allocative efficiency and effectiveness) toward achieving SDGs and macro-fiscal reforms. It aims to discuss lessons learned in this regard from different partners. It also aims to discuss collaboration with National partners, including UNCT, in implementing the SEM.</i></p> <p>Moderator: ESCWA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECLAC • Representative of Ministry of Finance, Jordan • Representative of Ministry of Finance, Tunisia • ANND <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCT Tunisia and UNCT Jordan representatives • OXFAM, SID
3.30 – 3.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
3.45 – 5.00	<p>Summary of discussions and Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCWA SEM Team and National Partners <p>Wrap up</p>