



مؤتمر التقييم العربي - الدورة السابعة

7th EvalMENA General Assembly and Evaluation Conference

Morocco, Rabat - 27-30 November 2018

*National Evaluation Policies in the MENA Region:
Institutional Framework and Processes at National and Sub-
national levels*

CONCEPT NOTE



August 2018

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BACKGROUND

[The Middle East and North Africa Evaluation Network \(EvalMENA\)](#) is the Regional Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluation (VOPE) of the MENA region and bringing together under its umbrella all national VOPEs of the region.

Starting with one officially registered VOPE in 2008 - the [Moroccan Evaluation Association \(AME\)](#), EvalMENA has created both a physical and virtual platform for evaluators from the MENA region and has grown steadily into eight officially registered VOPEs, namely: the Egyptian Research and Education Network (EREN) in 2012; the Palestinian Evaluation Association (PEA) in 2013; the Tunisian Evaluation Network (RTE) and the Jordan Development Evaluation Association (EvalJordan) in 2014; and the Lebanese Evaluation Association (LebEval), the Egyptian Development Evaluation Network (EgDEval) and the Algerian Evaluation Network (REA) in 2015. While not officially registered yet, a Sudanese Evaluation Association has also been established.

EvalMENA Member VOPEs:

1. [Moroccan Evaluation Association \(AME\)](#)
2. Egyptian Research and Evaluation Network (EREN)
3. [Palestinian Evaluation Association \(PEA\)](#)
4. [Tunisian Evaluation Network \(RTE\)](#)
5. Jordan Development Evaluation Association (EvalJordan)*
6. [Lebanese Evaluation Association \(LebEval\)](#)
7. Egyptian Development Evaluation Network (EgDEval)
8. Algerian Evaluation Network (REA)
9. Sudanese Evaluation Association (SEA)

* Current Chair of EVALMENA Board (2017-2018)

EvalMENA's membership is essentially for national VOPEs in the region, but individual evaluators can also be part of the network by subscribing to its listserv.

Currently, 650 members from 47 countries are signed-in to the EvalMENA listserv.

EvalMENA works hand in hand with its member VOPEs to systematically support the demand for and supply of development evaluation in the region by

catalysing new thinking and adapting innovative approaches inspired from the global advances in the field, and contributing to the enhancement of an enabling environment for evaluation in the

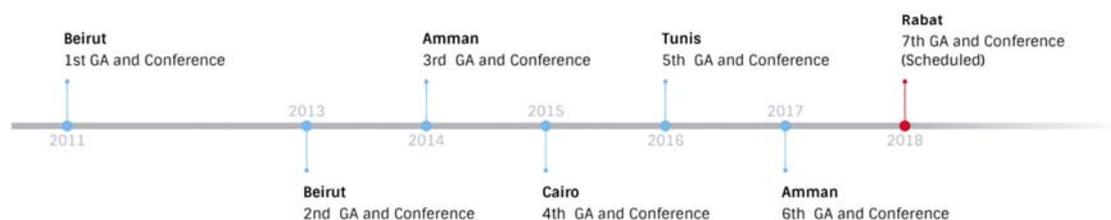


region. Particular emphasis is also put on increasing the body of knowledge on evaluation in the Arabic language.

Since its inception, EvalMENA has convened six General Assemblies and Evaluation Conferences in the last seven years in (Beirut (2011, 2013), Amman (2014, 2017), Cairo (2015), and Tunis (2016). The seventh General Assembly and Evaluation Conference is scheduled to take place in Rabat – Morocco during November 2018.

EvalMENA GAs and Evaluation Conferences

2011 - 2018



Every conference is usually preceded by pre-conference professional development workshops relying on partnerships and synergies with development partners and organizations. As such, EvalMENA has been able to invite many distinguished evaluation professionals from around the world to offer professional development workshops for EvalMENA members through win-win partnerships and constructive piggybacking on key meetings and seminars attended by the professionals. During the 7th conference, the pre-conference professional development workshops will be organized on november 27, 2018 and targeting evaluators and M&E professionals from the host country (Morocco) and young and emerging evaluators (YEEs) from the various MENA countries.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Main Theme

The main theme of the 7th edition of the EvalMENA General Assembly and Evaluation Conference focuses on:

English	French	Arabic
National Evaluation Policies in the MENA Region: Institutional Measures and Regional Evaluation Processes	Les politiques nationales d'évaluation dans la région MENA : mesures institutionnelles et dispositifs régionaux d'évaluation	سياسات التقييم الوطنية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا: التدابير المؤسسية وعمليات التقييم الإقليمي

This overall theme can be broken down to two parts:

1. National Evaluation Policies in the MENA Region: Comparative Experiences

Several countries around the world have stepped up their efforts over the last 30 years to institutionalize and strengthen their national evaluation systems and policies. In MENA regions, there has been an evolving recognition of the importance of evaluation of the governments' policies and programs since 2011. This is illustrated with the endorsement of evaluation in the Moroccan revised constitution in 2012. The 7th EvalMENA conference will be an opportunity to discuss the different paths followed by the MENA countries in reinforcing their national evaluation policies, compare the different approaches and explore the political and development contexts. The session will address the national evaluation policies in the MENA region according, but not limited, to the following aspects:

- a. a comparison of the different national experiences of designing and implementing national evaluation policies in order to present the specificities of the contexts and the results of these experiences in the MENA region.
- b. a presentation of the mechanisms of political and legal institutionalization of the evaluative function in the MENA region: designs, roles of different stakeholders, laws and regulatory frameworks, etc.
- c. the conditions needed for the success and maintenance of national evaluation policies that meet the requirements of the current MENA context in terms of democracy, transparency, governance, public accountability, human rights, gender equality, etc.

This first session will be dedicated to sharing and debating the challenges of institutionalizing the evaluation function, through the international experiences of setting up national evaluation policies.

2. Evaluation of regional policies and national development issues, towards a definition of a regional evaluation processes and mechanisms

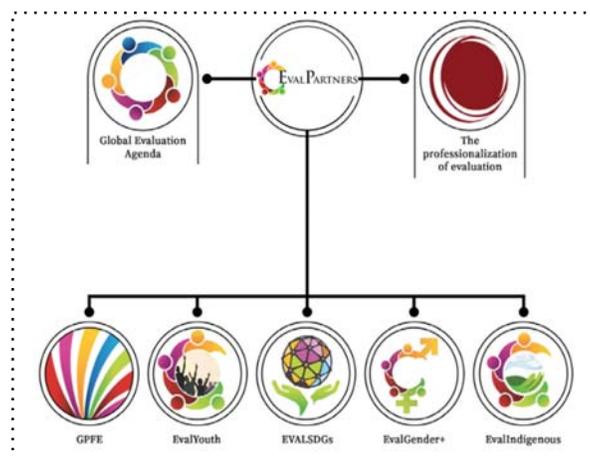
In the MENA context, the evaluation of sub-national (regional) public policies and national development plans and programs is a crucial political and pressing social issue to ensure the promised development outcomes are fulfilled. Institutionalizing of programs and policy

evaluation processes and mechanisms at the sub-national level that account for a multi-stakeholder perspective becomes vital.

In this second session, the conference will proceed to discuss the institutional forms of integration of the evaluation function in the process of regionalization in different MENA countries. The conference will also look at the practices and challenges of design and/or sustainability of these approaches and how they link to the national systems. Four main components will be discussed:

- a. Evaluation of sub-national public policies as a democratic requirement:
 - i. What are the comparative elements in the MENA region?
 - ii. What experiences can we learn from other countries?
 - iii. What are the fields of action/areas for improvements, functionalities and limits?
- b. What are the regulatory mechanisms for institutionalizing and framing the evaluation function at the sub-national levels?
 - i. How do local governments organize monitoring and evaluation functions within their jurisdictions?
 - ii. How do they define the demand for evaluation and how do they consider the required human, technical and financial resources?
- c. To what extent and form are participatory mechanisms for public consultation and engagement considered?
 - i. How can evaluation in the regions help to reduce the confidence of its citizens, especially young people regarding the actors of public action?
 - ii. How can the communication and debate of the products of regular assessments of local governments be organized and appropriated by citizens and other stakeholders?
- d. What methodological and practical stakes were adopted to achieve the objectives of the evaluation in the regions, namely accountability, social accountability, territorial and inclusive governance, improvement of public action at territorial level, etc.?

Cross-cutting Themes



Source (with modifications): EvalPartners Stocktaking Exercise Report (2018)

1. Global Evaluation Agenda

To look at the Global Evaluation Agenda, EvalAgena2020, from a MENA perspective with a closer look at achievements and way forward with implications both at the national (VOPE) level and regional (EvalMENA) level.

2. What Norms and Standards guide the Evaluation Profession in MENA?

The conference will continue to address the evolving discourse on evaluation norms and professionalization. The increasing demands for accountability and ownership of evaluation require the establishment and continuous review and update of evaluation norms and standards to ensure its continued relevance in guiding and further strengthening evaluation practices. The discussion will take the shape of panels, roundtable and networking sessions to allow participants to share their experiences and knowledge about the standards and norms to be in place to improve the evaluation practice and use of evaluation results.

3. How to use evaluation to inform the policy-making process?

Parliamentarians' role in promoting national evaluation capacities and national evaluation policies of the national development agenda, and in advocating through the Global Parliamentarian Forum are highly acknowledged. Building on the EFGR Round Tables held in 2016 and the subsequent mapping of national evaluation systems in countries in the region (supported by UN Women), the stream will provide a snapshot of the mapping and discuss means for pushing forward the national evaluation policies at the national levels. Panels, roundtables and networking sessions will bring members of MENA parliaments to tackle the issues and discuss how best to use evaluation to inform the policy-making process. (Potential continued partnership with UNWomen ASRO)

This session will be held after the participation of several MENA evaluators, parliamentarians and government representatives in the Global Evaluation Forum for Evaluation conference in Sri Lanka, EvalColombo2018, and shall continue from the global discussions to the MENA regional consultations.

Visit to the Parliament of Morocco

During the conference, a **visit will be made to the Moroccan Parliament by all participants** of the conference where participants and parliamentarians will work together on issues related to the Moroccan national evaluation efforts and the role of the Parliament in this regard. Parliamentarians will present the pioneering work they did a few years ago, legislating evaluation related laws and article in the constitution as the first Arab country to do so.

The visit will be the second to a national parliament during EvalMENA General Assembly and Evaluation Conference after Tunisia in 2016.

4. What have we learned from evaluating the SDGs in MENA?

This stream brings together the regional and global perspective on evaluating the SDGs. It will highlight the progress done so far by the government from the region in fulfilling the promises set in Agenda 2030. It will feature a critical review and perspective of the Voluntary National Reports

(NVRs) and processes with an emphasis on role of governments, parliaments, civil society and national evaluation VOPEs in engaging and monitoring the SDGs and influence the national policy-making process. While Officials from Ministries of Planning in the MENA region will present the national efforts toward the VNRs, Researchers and evaluators will provide a critical insight of the reports and processes. Special emphasis should be on how the national SDGs plans integrate issues related to displacement and refugees in development as well as humanitarian planning.

5. What roles are the Young and Emerging Evaluators playing in support of the national evaluation capacities in MENA?



Since its inception in 2011, EvalMENA has been keen to build local capabilities and placed young people on top of its priorities. EvalMENA's membership has grown from a handful of seasoned evaluators in a few countries to over 500 members, half of whom are young and/or emerging evaluators. This was further confirmed during the last three General Assemblies and Evaluation Conferences where over 50% of all attendees were under the age of 35.

EvalYouth EvalMENA Chapter has been established leading to Cairo in 2015 and directly after the Second Global Evaluation Forum in Nepal, which saw the initiation of the EvalYouth Network as one of the main initiatives of EvalPartners and the Global Evaluation Agenda (Agenda2020). In Amman last year, the Chapter was reinforced and strengthened with the partnership with UNFPA Arab States and the creation of three task forces with young evaluators as leaders of these task forces:

1. Context Analysis
2. Capacity Building
3. Advocacy

The 7th EvalMENA General Assembly and Evaluation Conference will provide the space for young and emerging evaluators (YEEs) in the region to work together to: a) present progress on the work they did during the previous year and b) work on their plans and priorities for the coming year. MENA YEE participation in the upcoming general assembly and conference will be supported for the second year in partnership with the UNFPA Arab States.

Pre-Conference Workshop for Young and Emerging Evaluators

As during the previous year, EvalYouth EvalMENA Chapter and UNFPA Arab States have agreed to deliver a special pre-conference workshop for young and emerging evaluators from the Arab World. This collaboration follows the success of the pre-conference workshop during the last EvalMENA General Assembly and Evaluation Conference in Amman where both partners have observed and the level of satisfaction from it as participating young and emerging evaluators from the MENA region have expressed and the impact it had after that on the institutionalization of the EvalYouth EvalMENA Chapter and its work.

6. How to make the national evaluation systems more Equity-focused and Gender-responsive in MENA?

EvalGender+ MENA will convene panels, roundtables and networking sessions addressing the MENA EvalGender+ network related issues and focus on evaluating SDGs with an equity-focused and gender-responsive lens. The stream will share the experiences and outcomes of the National Round Tables on “Monitoring and Evaluation of SDGs with Equity Focused and Gender Responsive (EFGR) lens” in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Algeria; as well as the in-depth case studies supported by UNWomen on Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan. Outcomes and recommendations of the white paper will be presented.

7. Exploring evaluation from an indigenous perspective in MENA

Potential first session on EvalIndigenous in the MENA region to initiate the regional network, especially if there is interest from attending evaluators. At least, progress from the global network will be presented and EvalMENA evaluators and other conference participants will be introduced to the newly established EvalPartner’s network.

8. How does Evalpartners support national evaluation capacities (EvalPartners Flagship Programs)

Good evaluation informs policymaking, facilitates adaptive management, enhances government and organizational learning, demonstrates accountability, and informs and empowers citizens. EvalPartners efforts are trying to shape the international agenda for evaluation by encouraging the evaluation profession to take a more global approach in addressing world problems, creating a platform for evaluation capacity development, promote evaluation and contribute to the “Global Evaluation Agenda 2016 – 2020” (EvalAgenda’2020).

For EvalPartners, Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of a policy, plan or program aiming at supporting evidence-based and informed decision-making at various levels while enhancing accountability and transparency. Evaluation combines evidence with sound ways of thinking about value-based criteria, or sometimes principles. Essentially, it aims for reasoned judgments of the merit, worth or significance of policies, programmes, strategies and systems.

EvalPartners actively works to implement the EvalAgenda 2020 with various stakeholders including Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) through the implementation of two flagship programmes:

- Flagship 1 - Strengthen National Evaluation Systems, aimed to increase integration of evaluation in national systems (NES) for the SDGs.
- Flagship 2 - “Evidence Matters” Campaign, aimed to raise the profile of evaluation amongst a wide range of stakeholders.

Flagship 1: Strengthen National Evaluation Systems

This program is designed to increase the level of engagement that has commenced through the regional National Evaluation Systems (NES) consultations. It intends to reinforce and support **inclusive multi-stakeholders’ partnerships** to develop national development roadmaps, establish robust National Evaluation Systems and develop voluntary national reviews (VNRs) that

incorporate evaluative evidence and consider evaluation as an integral component of SDG follow up and review.

Flagship program 1, aims to: (1) Strengthen National Evaluation Policies and Systems (NES) in the 16 “focus countries”, (2) Create Multi-stakeholder partnerships for an inclusive Voluntary National Review (VNR) process of national development agendas, and (3) Adopt evaluative dimension of VNR at the global level by 2020.

During the 7th Evalmena conference Flagship 1 will share progress to date on activities to strengthen national evaluation systems and policies including selection criteria for focus countries for different regions including the MENA region to assess the National Evaluation Systems.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include experts in the fields of evaluation, research and development in the MENA region, novice evaluators, individuals and organizations working in the evaluation field presenting their experiences, sharing lessons learned and evidence-based solutions of evaluation approaches and methodologies. The deliberation between the participants from the different MENA countries and from the globe are expected to enrich the knowledge base and provide a unique opportunity for networking.

The conference will continue targeting the participation from the private sector (as done during last GA and Conference in Jordan) given their social responsibility to the development sector in their countries, and will provide an opportunity for the corporate business to provide solutions and expertise in the Evaluation and Research fields to network with potential customers.

The participants will represent the following:

1. Representatives of EvalMENA national VOPEs, other MENA-based evaluators and M&E professionals whose countries do not have an official VOPE;
2. Representatives of the government from Morocco and other MENA countries;
3. Representatives of the parliament from Morocco and other MENA countries;
4. Representatives of local and international organizations;
5. Representatives of the private sector who are interested in supporting research and evaluation or provide solutions and expertise in such fields; and
6. Interested and invited international evaluators and other interested evaluators from other regions, especially southern VOPEs.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

To be updated in the coming weeks

CONFERENCE PARTNERS

- UNFPA Evaluation Office and Arab States Regional Office
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