The MENA MDTF’s 9th Program Council Meeting (PCM) was held in Oslo, Norway on February 21, 2020 – with thanks to Norway for kindly hosting the Meeting. The Meeting was chaired by Anna Bjerde, Director of Strategy & Operations for MENA and Nabil Shaiban, Program Manager of the MDTF (World Bank).

**Attendees:**

**Norway:**
1. Andreas Løvold, Deputy Director, MENA Region, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Elin Gjedrem, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Astrid

**Finland**
1. Ann-Christine Krank, Director of Northern Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Jan Koivu, Desk Officer, MENA Region ODA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**United Kingdom**
1. Archeeta Pujari, Regional Economic Advisor, North Africa Unit (DFID-FCO)

**World Bank**
1. Anna Bjerde, Director of Strategy & Operations, MENA
2. Thomas Djurhuus, Head, Partnership Unit, MENA
3. Nabil Shaiban, Program Manager, MENA MDTF
4. Denise Kassab, Program Coordination, MENA MDTF

**Summary of the main decisions at the PCM and next steps:**

The PCM demonstrated continued strong support to the MENA MDTF:

► The PCM supported the MENA MDTF as the most viable funding instrument supporting catalytic analytical work and capacity building for the World Bank’s MENA Strategy. Donors also indicated that MDTF activities are well aligned with their strategic priorities and acknowledged the increased challenges of operating in the region.

► The World Bank MENA presented its strategic perspectives on the MENA region, including the potential of energy, digital, private sector, human capital development; and the challenges over governance, growth, economic insecurity, oil and debt, digital
building blocks, the multidimensional challenges of human capital, gender disparities, costs of conflict, water scarcity, and climate vulnerabilities.

► Norway indicated that it has become more difficult to approach the MENA context and conflicts from a process perspective, making compromises among regional players more challenging.

► Norway emphasized that political and economic integration is lagging in the region, and countries are struggling with internal unity. Spillover effects of conflict however, show a degree of ‘integration’ across the region.

► Norway emphasized its special attention to Palestine, the Syrian conflict, Yemen and Tunisia. Key Norwegian development priorities that they would like to work together on include gender, water and climate change.

► Finland demonstrated strong support for the MENA MDTF and strategic perspectives, indicating alignment with their four-year strategy which includes support for gender equality, migrants, health, labor, climate sustainability, and use of natural resources.

► The UK continues to support the MENA MDTF, as evidenced by the 2019 support to the expansion of two activities related to water scarcity, private sector engagement and a new activity in Morocco supporting education.

► Donors provided positive feedback and indicated overall satisfaction with the results achieved under the MENA MDTF’s 2nd Cycle.

The PCM agreed to move forward with the MENA Umbrella 2.0 Trust Fund:

► An overview of the proposed MENA Umbrella 2.0 Trust Fund was provided to Donors. This new Umbrella will be established within the context of a Bank-wide effort to streamline Trust Funds.

► Norway and Finland provided a green light to proceed with the transitioning and scalability of the MENA MDTF into an Umbrella MDTF.

► The UK indicated that there is now greater clarity as to how the Umbrella TF will be set up and operate and would like to carry out further consultations following internal discussions to clarify processes and strategy.

► Further engagement with Donors on the roll-out process of the Umbrella will take place in the coming months and a timeline to roll-out the Umbrella MDTF is shared in this summary.

► It was clarified that the MENA MDTF will allow for soft-earmarking to the extent that partners can influence the work-plan and set priorities at the Partnership Council level. The MENA MDTF would work closely with Donors to have their priorities inform the work program.

► The PCM agreed to continue sharing of knowledge and analytical products with Donors. Flagship reports will be posted on the MENA MDTF’s website, and links to analytical and knowledge products shared with Donors as these become available.

The PCM Endorses the transitioning of the current MENA MDTF into a MENA Umbrella MDTF
The Bank presented the ongoing consolidation process of the MENA Region’s Trust Funds portfolio including the transformation of the current MENA MDTF, funded by Finland, Norway and UK into an Umbrella MDTF. The shift is part of the wider Bank Umbrella Trust Fund Reforms Umbrella 2.0 trust fund reform to strengthen the link between funding and the priorities of the World Bank, its clients and partners, and deliver impact at scale along with improved efficiencies. Umbrellas are “anchored” in a programmatic MDTF with a relatively broad thematic and/or geographic scope. In some cases, the Umbrella will simply consist of this programmatic MDTF. The innovation introduced with Umbrellas is the possibility to accommodate donors’ interest to support a narrower thematic or geographic scope (within the scope of the anchor MDTF), by “preferencing” their contribution and/or by associating one or more other TFs, which could be single or multi-donor. Umbrella will follow the “Umbrella principles for association”: one overarching results framework, one donor report and one governance body. Umbrellas will also prepare a visibility and communication plan.

The current MENA MDTF has been identified as the main future Umbrella Program for the MENA Region and financing instrument supporting the implementation of strategic objectives as highlighted in the MENA enlarged strategy and Strategic Fundraising Plan (SFP). Please refer to the two presentations on World Bank Umbrella Trust Fund Reforms and MENA Umbrella and timeline below.

An initial pipeline and emerging needs under the Umbrella MDTF will be shared with Donors to 1) identify and consolidate a common pipeline of priorities, along with costs, for TFs at the regional and country levels, and 2) use in efforts of expanding the Donor base.

The PCM endorsed the transition of the current MENA MDTF into the future Umbrella. As requested by the UK, the Bank will organize another session for the DFID MENA team to discuss further the Umbrella TF reforms.

MENA Umbrella MDTF Roll-out Timeline

- **March 2020**
  - Finalize a proposed timeline for roll-out of the Umbrella MENA MDTF

- **March/April 2020**
  - Present an initial pipeline and emerging needs
  - Issue a call of funds to existing Donors

- **July 2020**
  - Roll-out of Umbrella MENA MDTF = new TF in effect

- **September 2020 onwards**
  - Donor Outreach
  - PCM (January-February 2021)