

Summary of the minutes of the 7th meeting of the Strategic Orientation Council held on December 17th 2019

The Strategic Orientation Council (COS) of the MCA-Morocco Agency held its seventh session on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 10 a.m., under the chairmanship of the Head of Government, Mr. Saâd Dine El Otmani, President of the COS.

In his address at the opening of the meeting, the COS Chair welcomed the support given by MCC and the United States Government to the compact projects. He then highlighted the follow-up carried out by the COS, in the context of its work and on other occasions, of the various deadlines of the Program, as well as the sustained action taken by the Agency, in cooperation with the departments involved and all the partners and with the support of MCC, with a view to putting the planned projects on the right track.

The COS Chair stressed, in this regard, the start of the implementation of the "Integrated Establishment Projects" of the 90 beneficiary schools at the level of the three regions concerned (Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, Fez-Meknes and Marrakech-Safi), as well as the launch of infrastructure rehabilitation works and the acquisition of computer and didactic equipment for the beneficiary schools at the Tangier-Tetouan Al Hoceima region.

The COS Chair also recalled that architectural and technical studies relating to the construction, rehabilitation, and/or extension of the 15 TVET centers receiving support from the Charaka Fund are under development, and that within the framework of the RBF (results-based financing) program, 9 projects for the training and professional integration of young people and women into the labor market have been selected. The implementation of these projects is expected to result in the employment of nearly 5,000 beneficiaries in the private sector.

Additionally, the COS Chair stressed the start of technical and field work on the pilot operation of “Melkisation” of collective land in the Gharb and Haouz regions. He announced the start of off-site work on the three pilot industrial zones at the end of December 2019 and the launch in January 2020 of a call for tenders to select private partners for the development, planning and management of these zones.

The COS Chair indicated that the projects shortlisted for support from the Sustainable Industrial Zones Fund (FONZID) are currently being evaluated, specifying that these projects would make it possible to strengthen the supply of industrial land with an area of nearly 140 ha and the rehabilitation of more than 2,000 ha of industrial zones.

As with the projects of an operational nature, the COS Chair indicated that the other activities under the Compact relating to legal reforms had also made significant progress, as evidenced by the preparation of the preliminary draft law governing vocational training and the draft law on industrial reception areas, as well as the start of the implementation of actions to support the vocational training reform.

In conclusion, the COS Chair called on the Agency and all its partners to intensify their coordination and effective contribution to the Compact projects, and to work with a proactive approach to overcome the difficulties that these projects might face to achieve the objectives defined and to honor the commitments under the Compact II.

Following this speech, the Board approved the Minutes of the COS session held on May 31st 2019.

The members of the COS then followed an address by the Resident Director of MCC in Morocco, Mr. Walter W. Siouffi, who welcomed the good level of cooperation and coordination between the Moroccan and American parties for the implementation of the various projects planned under Compact II, indicating that the visit of Ms. Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the President of the United States of America, in Morocco last November was an opportunity to emphasize it. He also congratulated the Agency on the tangible progress made since the last session of the Board and stressed the need for joint action to accelerate the pace of achievements and disbursement of the Compact's funds.

The COS Chair then gave the floor to the Director General of the MCA-Morocco Agency, Mr. Abdelghni Lakhdar, who began his intervention by recalling the agenda of this session of the COS, before presenting the results of the implementation of the Compact projects and the financial achievements of the Agency, as well as the projections of realization of the projects by June 2022. The Director-General also introduced the draft resolutions submitted to the COS for approval.

Following the presentation of the Director General, the COS Chair gave the floor to Mrs. Laila Boufouss, Government Commissioner, to present her report for the 2018 financial year.

The floor was then given to Ms. Fatima Bargach, Chairperson of the Monitoring and Management Commission, to present her report on the work of the Commission.

Following these speeches, the COS Chair opened the discussion. In their interventions, the members of the COS expressed their overall satisfaction with the results achieved so far. The discussions focused on the clarification of certain points such as the schools Operation and Maintenance System, the content of the functional literacy sessions for the beneficiaries of the ‘Melkization’ operation, the points of vigilance concerning the projections of the realization of the projects of the Compact and the progress of the activity "Land Governance".

Subsequently, the Director General of the Agency took the floor to answer the comments and questions of the members of the COS.

After deliberations, the Board adopted the following resolutions, which were read out by the President:

**Resolution No. 1:**

The Board approves the minutes of the session of the Strategic Orientation Council (COS) of the MCA-Morocco Agency, held on May 31st 2019.

**Resolution No. 2:**

The Board approves two (2) partnership agreements concluded by the MCA-Morocco Agency within the framework of the Education for Employability Partnership Fund, and relating to:

1. The partnership agreement concluded with the "Education for Employment" Foundation (EFE), on the design and implementation of a "soft skills" training program for 40 teachers and guidance counsellors and 2800 students in the Marrakech-Safi region and aimed at promoting their openness to the professional environment and accompanying students during the post-baccalaureate orientation phase;
2. The renewal of the partnership agreement concluded with the Consortium Association ATIL-CODESPA Foundation, covering the design and implementation of a program of extracurricular activities and the creation of a series of clubs within schools, and aimed at improving individual skills and employability.

**Resolution No. 3:**

The Board approves the activity reports for years 1 and 2 of the Compact.

**Resolution No. 4:**

The Board approves the draft charter of the "Audit and Risk Committee".

**Resolution No. 5:**

The Board approves the amendments to the Charter of the Monitoring and Management Commission.

**Resolution No. 6:**

The Board approves the Agency's draft Procurement Plan, consolidated, completed, and updated.

**Resolution No. 7:**

The Board approves the changes to the Agency's salary scale.

The Board meeting was concluded at 12.30 p.m.