

Foreword

Since the revolution of 14 January 2011, the Tunisian people have embarked upon a new path towards more inclusive and fairer political, economic and social development, based on the rule of law, good governance, and transparency. The adoption of a roadmap of political reforms led to the election of a Constitutional Assembly in October of 2011, in charge of drafting a new constitution. The new government formed out of these elections has made the fight against corruption a national priority. A permanent governmental agency aimed at fighting corruption was established, and a minister in charge of governance and the fight against corruption was appointed to serve under the head of government in coordinating anti-corruption policies within the public sector.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has been committed to supporting the Tunisian people in this transition from the start. We have put the expertise and experience of all our member countries, especially in matters relating to the struggle against and prevention of corruption, at the disposition of the new Tunisia. With this objective in mind, and thanks to the financial assistance of the United Kingdom, a support project aiming at establishing an integrity framework was developed. This initial assessment of this public sector integrity framework constitutes part of this project.

This study provides to the new authorities an overview of the full range of legislative measures and institutional mechanisms geared towards the prevention of corruption in Tunisia today. It focuses on public procurement, as it is currently one of the areas most susceptible to corruption. It also highlights certain high priority reforms that are still necessary in order to bring the whole public sector integrity framework, including in matters of procurement, in conformity with international best practices.

The battle against corruption is a continuous effort requiring preventive measures, investigative procedures, and legal actions. Tunisia is only just beginning the campaign to reinforce the transparency and integrity of the public sector. The recent legislative reforms and institutional initiatives are promising. They nonetheless should be strengthened and supported over the

long term by sufficient means, as well as by specific measures enabling the prevention of public sector corruption.

Effectively and visibly combating corruption and encouraging integrity in Tunisia will have a significant impact on the social and economic development of the country. The OECD stands ready to support the unfolding reform process and to join Tunisia in its transition towards a stronger, healthier, and more equitable economy. The Tunisian Revolution has revealed the scope of corruption during the Ben Ali era, when public resources were embezzled to serve personal interests to the detriment of Tunisia's economic and social development. In January of 2011, the Tunisian people rose up against this nondemocratic system diseased by corruption and the supremacy of individual interests over the common good.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Boucher', is written over a horizontal line.

Richard Boucher
Deputy Secretary-General
OECD

Acknowledgements

The OECD Secretariat wishes to express its gratitude to all the stakeholders who made this project possible, starting with the Head of the Tunisian government, Hamadi Jebali. He has demonstrated his personal commitment to launch, in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, a comprehensive collaborative effort between the OECD and the Tunisian government aimed at reinforcing public governance and the fight against corruption.

To further encourage this drive for reform and share the experience of member countries, the OECD has mobilized at the highest level, in particular with the active participation in this project of Yves Leterme and Richard Boucher, Deputy Secretary-Generals of the OECD.

This project has been carried out under the authority of Rolf Alter, Director of the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate. It has also benefited from the strategic advice of Janós Bertok, Head of the Public Sector Integrity Division, and from Carlos Conde, Head of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme.

This report was written under the supervision of Elodie Beth, Head of the Public Procurement Unit, by Sana Al-Attar, Policy Analyst in the Public Sector Integrity Division, Marijana Trivunovic, Integrity Expert, and Peter Pease, Public Procurement Expert. Sarah Michelson also contributed to the preparation of the publication, and Jennifer Allain prepared the manuscript for publication.

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- the Minister of Administrative Reform, Mohamed Abbou;

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