University Governance Screening Card

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) governments engaged in governance reforms have had university governance reform on their agenda for some time. In an effort to respond to this issue, in 2011, the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) and the World Bank launched the **University Governance Screening Card (UGSC),** with the aim of supporting governance and accountability reforms. The latter will have an impact on the quality of education which will, in turn, help foster the development of a knowledge economy for MENA countries – a crucial strategy for tackling the issue of high unemployment rates in the MENA region.

The primary focus of the UGSC partnership was to address issues related to university governance, and this was later expanded to include internationalization and financial sustainability. To this end, a network of tertiary education institutions from eight MENA countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Morocco, and Tunisia), gathering more than 150 institutions, was created in 2012 to foster exchanges and discussion among participating universities.

How the UGSC tool works

UGSC is a benchmarking tool that not only assesses to what extent tertiary education institutions in the MENA region are following governance practices aligned with their own institutional goals, but also allows them to monitor their progress and to compare themselves with other institutions. It uses an institution-based approach that focuses on tertiary education institutions as opposed to (only) national systems or country ratings. It thus has the capacity to: i) identify strengths and weaknesses in individual institutions; ii) identify governance trends and practices by type of institution; iii) illustrate governance trends at the national level and iv) generate interest - and peer pressure - in initiating reforms at the institutional, national, and regional level.

The UGSC uses five dimensions that together capture the multidimensional nature of governance: 1) Overall Context, Mission, and Goals; (2) Management Orientation; (3) Autonomy; (4) Accountability; and (5) Participation. Each dimension has been attributed a set of indicators and a questionnaire from which governance indicators are scored. A weighting system aggregates those indicators and translates the questionnaire to a scoring instrument to record the results by institution. The score on a dimension should be interpreted as an indication of the university's situation vis-à-vis one of the global trends in governance practices, and not as a performance score. In addition to the questionnaire, the UGSC includes a self-perception tool, which assess the extent to which the leadership of tertiary education institutions is aware of the governance model and practices they follow.

The tool has been used on a voluntary basis and the results of the institutional report are confidential. Aggregated results at the national and regional level are publicly disseminated while respecting anonymity of participating institutions.

<u>Regional conferences</u>

Each year, a regional conference is organized to present the latest results of the tool and to provide an opportunity for members of the network to exchange good practices and to discuss the way forward.

- <u>6th MENA Regional Tertiary Education Conference</u> "Towards Competitiveness and Equity in Tertiary Education in the MENA Region: Collaboration for Good Governance, Sustainable Financing and Internationalization", June 15-16, 2017, Marseille, France. More information available [here](#).
- <u>5th International MENA Tertiary Education Conference</u> "Paradigm Shifts in Tertiary Education: Improved Governance and Quality for Competitiveness and Employability", May 30 – June 1, 2016, Algiers, Algeria. More information available [here.](#)
- <u>4th International Conference</u> "Empowering MENA Higher Education Institutions through Information Sharing and Improved Governance", May 12-14, 2015, Beirut, Lebanon. More information available [here](#).
- <u>3rd Conference</u> focusing on the nexus between quality assurance and governance, 2014, Tunis, Tunisia.
- <u>2nd Conference</u> exploring the lessons learned and launch the network, 2012, Rabat, Morocco.
- <u>1st Workshop</u> introducing the UGSC benchmarking tool, 2011, Cairo, Egypt.

<u>Relevant documents</u>

Reports

- [One Pager Summary on Governance, Financing and Internationalization](#) (2017)
- [Benchmarking Governance as a Tool for Promoting Change](#) (2013)
- [Universities through the looking glass: benchmarking university governance to enable higher education modernization in MENA](#) (2012)

Presentations

- [Building a University Governance Screening Card for MENA (and beyond)](#) (2016)
- [Building a University Governance Screening Card for MENA (and beyond)](#) (2015)