



08 MARS 2022

Beni Mellal Khenifra Regional Council
07" Mars 2022
Open Government Partnership Selection Committee,



Respectfully, Madams and Sirs,

I am very gratified to convey, on behalf of the Regional Council of Beni Mellal Khenifra (RC BMK), our determination to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local Program and to restate Morocco's commitment to consolidating its successes in terms of openness and participatory democracy within the OGP project.

Morocco's new constitution and regionalization process aim to address development challenges by bolstering decentralized government, including regional councils, through an action framework based on good governance, transparency, and participation.

As a leading region in Morocco, Béni Mellal Khénifra Regional Council has various prerogatives, which are carried out through the regional development program and the Regional Territorial development scheme. In order to implement these strategic plans, the RC has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at improving communication with its consultative bodies and citizens, as well as building tools and procedures to improve decision-making transparency. The RC is also working on a funding structure that would improve the openness and reliability of funding for Civil Society Organizations.

The RC is eager to join the OGP effort initiative in order to strengthen regional best practices and contribute to the promotion of good governance, transparency, and accountability. As a result, the RC's interest in joining the OGP originates primarily from the benefits that such membership could provide in the following areas:

- promoting the values of transparency and citizen empowerment;
- Contributing to the establishment of strong examples of successful regional institutions
- Consolidating good governance and transparency in the region by harnessing the positive power of technology;





- Building the capacities of elected members, staff, and civil society organisations (CSOs) involved in the regional development process;
- Strengthening coordination with other tiers of local government and the public administration on a national and regional scale,
- Learning from and exchanging experiences with other OGP members;
- Strengthening the region's position in multilateral and bilateral cooperation with international donors and international organizations.
- Strengthening the capacities of elected members, staff, and civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in the regional development process;

TRANSPARENCY, CO-CREATION AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Since its election, the Beni Mellal Khenifra RC has made openness, co-creation, and participatory democracy a priority. In this context, the RC created and launched The Regional Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy (RGSIS), which is a success story in terms of both the process and the results. Indeed, the development of this plan took two years (2019–2021), during which time a smooth and structured co-creation process was undertaken. This method comprised a participatory assessment of the region's GSI condition, which included all stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society organizations and international funders. The second phase involved hosting a participatory and inclusive workshop using the WSR approach (Whole System in the Room) as well as multiple workshops to create consensus on the diagnostic results and develop common goals and action plans.

The RC created the regional OGP action plan with regional Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for the period 2020-2022, through two mechanisms: co-creation workshops and an online co-creation platform (www.benimellalkhenifra.ma). Co-creation workshops with CSOs were organized in June 2020.

Citizens from various sectors and communes were mobilized with the help of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the assistance of CSOs. Following these constructive workshops, the RC developed an online co-creation platform where the action plan emerging from the co-creation





Workshops was presented and subjected to citizen voting and ideas for improvement.

As a result of this dynamic participatory approach, the RC has developed a co-created action plan that is aligned with the national OGP action plan and consists of ten commitments that cover different areas. Finally, the RC also promotes citizen participation through petitions.

The council, with the help of its partners, has made available to the public an audio-visual material illustrating the process in a schematic and accessible way. The RC's goal is to improve citizen's participation and develop a coherent approach to citizen engagement.

CAPACITY AND RESOURCES FOR CO-CREATION

The RC has already developed a co-created action plan that is in line with OGP principles, as well as the Moroccan national OGP action plan, which is overseen by the Ministry in charge of digital transformation and public sector modernization, through the signing of an agreement partnership.

During this co-creation process, the region mobilized significant financial and human resources.

In terms of financial resources, the region has committed to developing all of the projects included in its co-created OGP action plan, including two pioneering platforms for public procurement transparency and monitoring and evaluation of the Regional Development Program (RDP). The RC's capacity includes a strong and independent Consultative Body with Civil Society, which serves as a key partner throughout the entire OGP application and implementation process. By issuing advisory opinions that reflect the interests of the communities they represent, the CBs are true partners in defining and deciding on regional policy choices.

In addition, depending on the topic and scope of the projects implemented, other CSOs could be added to the OGP task force.✈





OGP VALUES, STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS, AND VALUE PROPOSITION

The RC is devoted to adding value in three key areas. To begin, by sharing proven experience with CSOs in conducting and implementing co-creation processes and participatory democracy. Furthermore, the RC created guides and specific documents for CSOs on petitions and policy proposals, as well as detailed procedures that can be tailored to the needs of similar organizations. Second, by taking the lead in promoting OGP principles among similar institutions in Morocco and in the MENA region. Finally, by sharing its open government experience with other regional and local jurisdictions in specific networks, such as:

- Morocco's Association of Regions (since 2015).
- The National Conference of Geoparks Network (NCG) (since 2014).
- The United Regions Organization/Forum of Regional Governments and Global Associations of Regions (URO FRGGAR since 2017).
- The International Association of Francophone Regions (AIRF) (in 2005).
- The UNESCO Global Geoparks Network in Africa (since 2019).
- Host of the 10th international conference of UNESCO Geoparks "2023"

POLICY AREAS AND FUTURE AMBITION

The RC of the BMK region commits itself to work on the following policy areas:

- Open data: The RC has a digital platform for a MEL system to monitor, evaluate, and learn from its performance about the Regional Development Program projects.
- Gender and Social Inclusion: Through the effective implementation of its Regional Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy, the RC is committed to moving towards an inclusive and open region eager to rehabilitate under privileged populations (RGSi).
- Public procurement: The RC wishes to make their public spending more transparent by using a digital platform "Open-contracting." Participation of CSOs, citizen involvement, and the implementation of accountability





systems for receiving and acting on citizen feedback are all part of this.

- Citizen participation: The RC wishes to strengthen participatory democracy and public consultation mechanisms in the region in order to increase and improve civic participation.
- Communication: The RC developed a communication strategy that addressed both internal and external communications. This strategy seeks to institutionalize the way the RC communicates and to set a roadmap for how the institution can adapt its communication methods to reach different audiences.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude for considering us to be part of the Open Government Partnership Local Program. We hope also to join the global initiative of OGP in order to peer review our efforts with other governments in the world and share our expertise with them.

I can guarantee you that the Beni Mellal Khenifra RC is interested and highly committed to this process, and i eagerly await a positive response. Finally, if you would like to know more about our beautiful region, please visit our website: <https://www.benimellalkhenifra.ma>

Best regards,

Adil El Barakat
President of the Beni Mellal Khenifra RC

