



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

National Workshop on Social Expenditure Monitor of Tunisia:

Mapping data and Methodology

Beirut, Virtual Meeting, 14-16 July 2020

Summary

The National Workshop on Social Expenditure Monitor of Tunisia, Mapping Data and Methodology, was held online via WebEx on July 14-15-16, 2020.

The primary aim of the workshop with representatives of Tunisia was to discuss the indicators of SEM in Tunisia context, data compilation methodology and preliminary analysis of SEM of Tunisia as well as identify data gaps and explore possible disaggregation of data sources/methods. The workshop was attended by representatives of several Tunisia's governmental ministries and entities as well as the team working on the Social Expenditure Monitor from ESCWA.

Participants deliberated on means to improve the scope of SEM and its usefulness for policymakers. The present report summarises key interventions and discussions and sets out the recommendations made by the participants.

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Introduction

1. Public social expenditure is an important means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its effectiveness depends on how informed and efficient public expenditure choices are, given fiscal space and macroeconomic policy coherence. To date, member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) do not have a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring public social expenditure and for linking it to macroeconomic policy coherence. As a result, budget allocations sometimes support multiple and overlapping social programmes, and policies are often mismatched or inadequate for achieving social development priorities and realizing the SDGs. Given the pressure on public budgets across Arab countries, such expenditure management is unsustainable.

2. ESCWA has embarked on a project entitled “Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM): An Integrated Framework for Supporting Macro fiscal Policies and the SDGs” to respond to this challenge. A pioneering tool for Arab States, SEM will provide comprehensive mapping of public social expenditure to inform budgeting and social policy reforms. The establishment of SEM in a national context would require collection and analysis of data according to an agreed and adapted SEM framework.

3. ESCWA has developed a framework on SEM titled “Social Expenditure Monitor for Arab States: A Tool to Support Budgeting and Fiscal Policy Reform”, in English and Arabic languages, which was developed during the course of discussions in 2019 with representatives of Jordan, Tunisia and other member States, UN agencies, and with inputs from regional and global experts. The framework is aligned with the SDGs, flexible and can be adapted to national specificities.

4. Given this background, the SEM framework has been applied to Tunisia to compile data from the budgets since 2014 till 2020. As the first stage of implementation of the SEM, national workshop with different ministries/entities of Tunisia would help improving the SEM in Tunisia national context, methodological issues relating to compilation of data, and it would be an opportunity to discuss preliminary analysis of the data, identify data gaps and solutions and discuss the course of action for moving to other stages of implementation of the SEM.

5. In this context, ESCWA and Tunisia counterpart of the project organized a national workshop entitled “National Workshop on mapping data for SEM from public budgets of Tunisia” which was virtually held on July 14-15-16, 2020. The aim of the meeting with representatives of Tunisia was to discuss the indicators of SEM in Tunisia context, data compilation methodology and preliminary analysis of SEM of Tunisia as well as identify data gaps and explore possible disaggregation of data sources/methods. The workshop was attended by representatives of several Tunisia’s governmental ministries and entities as well as the team working on the Social Expenditure Monitor from ESCWA.

I. Key Messages

6. Participants deliberated on means to improve the scope of SEM and its usefulness for policymakers. Key messages stemming from the discussions can be summarized as follows:

- a) The Tunisia team is highly supportive to preparing the first SEM. Social expenditures are social and “smart” investments that build human capital and fosters sustainable growth. In times of crisis, whether in form of a pandemic, war or weather catastrophe, the SEM allows the activation of better social “counter-cyclical” tool whereby it serves as a tool to inform decisions to counter a boom or a recession through transfers, fiscal measures and multiple programs.

- b) With public finance being under stress along with the pandemic of COVID-19, it is now more challenging to meet the social needs of the society within the given budget. The monitor comes in hand to see how the resources can be rationalized and how public resources can be rebalanced while maintaining macroeconomic stability.
- c) The mapping of beneficiaries to expenditures is a value addition of the SEM. The SEM shows that there are several missing beneficiaries to the expenditures of line ministries in 2020 budget. **In 2021 budget preparation process, each line ministry will try to incorporate the main beneficiaries** according to each subprogram's expenditures. This will be the start to identify beneficiaries and enhance targeting as well as efficiency. A proposed template to identify the main beneficiaries is presented in Annex II for consideration of each line ministry.
- d) There is a need for in-depth training on Social Expenditure Monitor to build capacity of officials to harmonize the understanding of the concepts, indicators and linkage of SEM to KPIs and SDGs in the context of Tunisia. The training will help all, including officials responsible for programmes and results based budget units in the line ministries. ESCWA is happy to consider preparing video training modules on SEM. In addition, national workshops are part of the project activities.
- e) Tunisia team will review the mapping of sub-programmes and budget allocations and revert to ESCWA with additional feedback, if any, by end of July 2020. ESCWA is available to assist in the review if needed. The suggestions proposed during the meeting on modifying some of the indicators are incorporated in the SEM framework (Annex I attached separately).
- f) ESCWA is filing the SEM information into a digital database which will be an interactive platform to visualize data in graphs and charts. The digital platform will be helpful for better understanding of social expenditure data to inform decisions linking to the KPIs. Upon its completion ESCWA will share with MoF for clearance.
- g) There was also discussion about broadening the scope of social expenditure to include other sources than just those from public budgets. It is a consideration for the upcoming period after finalizing the first SEM in 2020.

II. Topics of Discussion

A. Overview of the framework of Social Expenditure Monitor (SEM)

7. The indicators of the Social Expenditure Monitor measure expenditures by purpose (Education, Health, Social Protection), by main beneficiaries (children, youth, socially marginalized) and by type (current, capital) to support the SDGs targets and indicators.

8. Within each dimension, an indicator entitled "other expenditures" is added in order to enable the SEM to map expenditures that can not be attributed to a specific indicator but can be captured at the dimension level.

9. In Tunisia, within each ministry there exist the Leadership and support program, entitled "administrative and institutional support", which is mapped on the dimension level. In some cases, all programs of a certain ministry feed into a single dimension, so by default the leadership and support program is mapped to the dimension specified (example: education). In other cases, a certain ministry has several sub program programs whereby each sub program maps to a different dimension (example: ministry of social affairs). In this case, the leadership and support program can not be clearly attributed to a single dimension. If

the disaggregation of administrative cost of sub-programs is not available within ministries, we can work together to develop a methodology on the matter in the near future.

B. Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Education dimension

10. Regarding the subprograms in 2020, several subprograms were merged into 1 subprogram thus leading to a difficulty in disaggregating the current and capital expenditures. An example of this is the “Eradication of illiteracy” subprogram in the ministry of social affairs. Prior to 2020, the subprogram was independent. In 2020, it was merged with other subprograms entitled “social advancement subprogram”. This led to a limitation in data disaggregation.

11. Regarding the ministry of trade’s contribution to the education dimension, its subprogram “interior trade” includes subsidies to school papers. Therefore, this particular subsidy was mapped in the education dimension while other components were mapped to the other dimensions accordingly.

12. In our analysis of the preliminary results of the SEM, we are trying to see whether expenditures are adequate in achieving KPIs or SDGs, and look at how it is possible to rationalize and re-allocate the expenditures without increasing it, given the limited fiscal space.

13. Ministry of Higher education’s comments with regard to early childhood education or what is termed preparatory years: it includes children under the age of 6 years and this role is shared by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women and the Family, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Local Affairs according to the following ratios:

- a) Public and private schools: 37% of the Ministry of Education
- b) Kindergartens: 50% of the Ministry of Women and Family
- c) Schools: 13% of the Ministry of Religious Affairs

Expenditures of Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors are available while other expenditures are not explicitly found in budgets so if relative ministries can provide data necessary it would be a great plus to the dataset.

14. For the beneficiaries in the education dimension: "the elderly" can be added if we consider that quality education is a right for all for life, which is one of the sustainable development goals.

C. Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Education dimension

15. The representative of Ministry of women, children, family and seniors clarified that beneficiaries for the women’s program, mapped to indicator “discrimination against women and gender-based violence”, are women, girls, and elderly as well.

16. Regarding the elderly program which is mapped to the indicator 2.1 “Outpatient services including residential care”, it was clarified that the aim of the program primarily is to re-integrate the elderly in the society and in the political life and therefore the program should be mapped to the social protection dimension.

17. Regarding expenditures on medicines, medical products, appliances and equipment, these expenditures are part of a comprehensive health package already included within the health programs initially and not as a separate expenditure.

18. All health services for athletes are mapped in the Dimension of Culture, Arts and Sports as the initial purpose is sports. SEM purpose is to target health expenditure to the most vulnerable marginalized, poorest, etc.

19. As for expenditures on Research and development, it is minimal under the health and nutrition dimension and therefore R&D is another area to strengthen health and preventative aspect.

D. Focused discussion on programmes and activities relating to data on Social Protection and Food Security

20. Central and Regional Social Advancement Program in the ministry of social affairs aim to limit the exclusion of marginalized groups and the poor families. As for the funds that were mapped, they are parts of the government which depend on the contributions of the private and public sectors.

21. Globally, ESCWA is developing a tracker on Social Protection Policies and in Tunisia a number of measures under Social Protection has been taken. The global view has taken the approach of dividing the expenditures into contributory and noncontributory appeal to help us classify the expenditures in that lens. In Tunisia's SEM, the indicators for Tunisia are not defined on the basis of contributory and noncontributory. Therefore, a joint work can be done to define contributory and noncontributory aspects of the eight indicators mentioned in the dimension of Social Protection and Food Security in order to expand the scope of the framework.

22. Tailoring the SEM to a national context, 5.9 is training and rehabilitation of prisoners upon the prisons and reforms programs in the ministry of justice.

23. Contributions of ministry of social affairs to the national institute for work and social studies is mapped it to 5.8a (research on social protection) and not to the education dimensions since its main purpose is to perform social statistics regarding social security programs.

24. Indicator 5.1 "Support towards achieving basic income, housing, and food security" is very broad and needs disaggregation. Therefore, the indicator will be divided into 3 sub-indicators as follows:

- 5.1a Support towards achieving basic income
- 5.1b Support to housing
- 5.1c Support to food security
- 5.1d Pension Schemes

25. Indicator 5.3 "Support to family and children, including maternity benefits" is disaggregated into sub-indicators as follows:

- 5.3a Support to family
- 5.3b Support to children
- 5.3c Maternity Benefits

26. Indicator 5.8 "Research on social protection and food security" is disaggregated into sub-indicators as follows:

- 5.8a Research on social protection
- 5.8b Research on food security

E. Focused discussion on programmes and activities relating to data on Housing and community amenities

27. If the ministry of education has an expenditure related to financing houses for employees, such as building houses for the employers at distinct prices from the market, the expenditure is accounted for in the education dimension since the primary purpose of this expenditure is providing educational services. The same concept applies for other ministries as well.
28. A suggestion by ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries representative suggested that the program “forestry and preparation of agricultural land” to be added to 3.4/3.5 since better preparation of agriculture lands facilitate the roads in rural area. However, there is no direct expenditure on this. This is an indirect effect, the main focus of the program is to conserve biodiversity, protect forests and avoid land degradation and therefore is mapped to 7.4.

F. Focused discussion on programmes and activities relating to data on Housing and community amenities

29. This is a critical dimension that is often not counted in Social Expenditures in general such as in the OECD Database, however, SDGs has provided a lens that ensures sustainable growth and improve equality.
30. Some indicators in this dimension are adjusted as follows:
- Indicator 4.1 “Incentives to encourage female employment” is rephrased to become “Encourage female employment and promote equal opportunities for women in higher positions”
 - Indicator 4.4 “Employment generation Programmes” is accompanied with monitoring and following up as well to become “Employment generation programmes including monitoring and follow up”.

31. To disaggregate data on supporting SME’s and business and supporting individuals, indicator 4.3 “Grants and other incentives to private enterprises/start-ups for job creation” is divided into 2 sub-indicators as follows:
- 4.3a Grants and other incentives to SMEs and private enterprises for job creation
 - 4.3b Grants and other incentives to self-employment/ entrepreneurs for job creation

G. Focused discussion on programmes and activities relating to data on Housing and community amenities

32. Disaggregating indicator 6.2 “Promoting individuals and organizations in art and cultural fields” into 2 sub-indicators as follows:
- 6.2a: Promoting individuals and organizations in art fields
 - 6.2b: Promoting individuals and organizations in cultural fields
33. Adjusting indicator 6.3 to include physical education to become: “Sports and physical education facilities and services” and disaggregating it into:
- 6.3a: Sports and Physical education facilities and services
 - 6.3b: Promoting Physical education
34. Disaggregating indicator 6.5 “Research on advancing sports, culture and art” into 2 sub-indicators as follows:

- 6.5a Research on advancing sports
- 6.5b Research on advancing arts and culture

H. Focused discussion on programmes and activities relating to data on Environmental Protection

35. Disaggregating indicator 7.4 “Protecting biodiversity/ combating desertification/land degradation” into 2 sub-indicators as follows:
- 7.4a Protecting biodiversity
 - 7.4b Combating desertification/land degradation

III. Organization of the workshop

A. Date and venue

36. The National Workshop on Social Expenditure Monitor of Tunisia was held online via WebEx on July 14-15-16 2020.

B. Attendance

37. The workshop was attended by representatives of several Tunisia’s governmental ministries and entities as well as the team working on the Social Expenditure Monitor from ESCWA. Annex I to the present report sets out the list of participants.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

38. At the workshop, the Participants adopted the agenda as set out in Annex III to the present report.

Annex I

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Annex II

Proposed Template to distribute the public expenditures across main beneficiaries:

Suggestion for use of line ministries in preparing budgets

Ministry	Program	Sub-Program	Population											Monitoring and evaluation	Total (values in Tunisian Dinar)				
			Children			Young persons (aged 15-24)			Adults (aged 24+)			Older persons	Persons with disabilities, sickness and survivors			Socially marginalized or at risk of social exclusion, refugees and immigrants			
			Male	Female	All children	Male	Female	All young persons	Male	Female	All adults								
Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors	Women and Family	Women, Family and Equal Opportunities				X				X									X+X + X

Source: ESCWA SEM Framework

Annex III

Agenda

Social Expenditure Monitor of Tunisia: Mapping data and Methodology (*Tunis time: 9.00 to 13.30/ Beirut time 11.00 – 3.30*)

14 July 2020

11:00 – 11:15	Welcome and opening remarks --ESCWA --Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation
11:15 – 12:15	SEM for Tunisia: Updates on the project Overall data and key trends and its usefulness for budgeting and fiscal policy decisions (ESCWA) Mapping framework for Tunisia data (ESCWA) Discussion round the table
12:15 – 13:15	Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Education dimension
13:15 – 13:30	Break
13:30 – 14:30	--Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Health and nutrition dimension
14:30 – 15:00	Summary of discussions on Education and Health dimensions; identification of possible disaggregation of data (source/method)

15 July 2020

11:00 – 13:15	-- Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Health and nutrition dimension
13:15 – 13:30	Break
13:30 – 15:00	--Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Employment and labour market interventions --Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Housing and community amenities --Summary of discussions; identification of disaggregation of data (source/method)

16 July 2020

11:00 – 13:15	Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Environment protection Focused discussion on programmes and activities related to data on Culture, arts and sports dimension
13:15 – 13:30	Break
13:30 – 15:00	Summary of discussions; Way Forward; Next steps for implementation of the project activities Wrap up

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