



Nations Unies
Commission économique pour l'Afrique



Université Mohammed V- Rabat
Faculté des Sciences Juridiques,
Economiques et Sociales
Rabat - Agdal

Call for Papers

External Balances, competitiveness and structural transformation process of the Moroccan economy

In an increasingly complex international environment and given the strategic importance and the multidimensional nature of competitiveness, Morocco has undertaken several related reforms. The goal of these reforms is to strengthen the country's overall competitive potential, to find a place as an emerging economy and attractive investment location and to lead new momentum toward economic and social development.

This strategic direction was reinforced during the 2000s through the implementation of a series of transverse reforms (privatization, dismantling monopolies, simplification of procedures, modernization of public administration, financial sector reform, etc.), the launch of strategies to promote certain key economic sectors (Plan Maroc Vert, Emergence, Morocco Logistics, etc.), and the signing of free trade agreements with developed and emerging countries (EU, USA, Turkey, Jordan, etc.) to offer Moroccan exporters preferential access to other international markets.

All these developments have differently impacted the Moroccan economic sectors in terms of contribution to GDP and employment. The export structure is also beginning to diversify, notably as a result of new sectors emerging with higher added value and higher technological content, particularly the automotive and aerospace industries. This direction grants paramount importance to FDI and its sectorial allocation with the objective of taking advantage of the potential it offers in terms of knowledge spillovers, technology transfer, and enhancing competitiveness. Following these developments, recently there has been some attenuation of both the current account deficit (-5.8% in 2014 compared to -9.7% in 2012) as well as the trade deficit (-20.3% in 2014 compared to -24.4% in 2012). In this context, the objective of this call for papers is for an in depth analysis of the evolution of the competitiveness of Moroccan exports, its determinants, and its interactions with regard to the external balances of the Moroccan economy and its structural transformation.

The questions and analysis covered within the different paper proposals must fall within the following three areas:

As part of the **first research area**, the proposed papers should address a historical and detailed analysis of Morocco's external accounts by attempting to address key issues such as the structural nature of the trade deficit balance, decreased surpluses from the balance of services, changes in transfers, FDI dynamics, FDI attractiveness, and their impact on competitiveness.

Submissions concerning **the second area** will focus on the exchange rate's role in the evolution of cost competitiveness while addressing the issue of measuring the equilibrium exchange rate. This area should also cover aspects relating to the sustainability of the current account and capital account opening process.

Submissions within **the third area** should thoroughly analyze the dynamics of the competitiveness of Morocco's exportable supply, its main determinants (human capital, business climate, institutional quality, research and development, etc.) and the potential role of the process of sector and geographic diversification of exports within the structural transformation of Morocco's economy. The papers proposed within this area could also focus on the analysis of changes in the Product-Space, the evolution of the sophistication of Moroccan exports, as well as the study of the extensive and intensive margins of Moroccan exports.

Finally, material that includes simulation models would also provide a considerable contribution by trying to assess the impact of sectorial and geographical diversification of exports, as well as their degree of sophistication, on the national economy in general and on the trade balance in particular.

Non-exhaustive list of paper topics

- Determinants of trade and current account deficits in Morocco's balance of payments;
- Elasticities of foreign trade;
- Comparative study of Morocco's FDI attractiveness and the FDI dynamics and sectorial structure;
- FDI - Competitiveness relationship;
- Capital account opening process: impact assessment and challenges;
- Moroccan exchange rates and cost competitiveness;
- Comparative study on the link between exchange regimes and external accounts;
- Equilibrium exchange rate of the dirham;
- Current account sustainability;
- Dynamics and determinants of Moroccan export competitiveness;
- Moroccan competitiveness and economic transformation;
- Diversification and sophistication of Moroccan exports;
- Etc.

Paper submission guidelines

Preliminary proposals must contain:

- Author's first and last name, institutional affiliation, and email address;

- The analytical and empirical results almost finalized, methodological approach, as well as analysis and main conclusions.
- Drafts can be sent in French or English.
- These first proposals should be sent by February 20th, 2016 to: contact@ocppc.ma and sadtounsi@gmail.com
- The proposal authors selected by the Scientific Committee will be notified on February 25th to finalize the documents and PowerPoint presentations.
- The papers should represent original research not presented or published elsewhere.
- Authors of the selected papers will receive an honorarium of 7000 MAD per paper.

Calendar

- February 20, 2016: Preliminary proposal submission deadline
- February 25, 2016: Committee opinion and notification of authors
- March 20, 2016: Deadline for sending full versions of documents and PowerPoint presentations
- April 28, 2016: Conference to present the selected works at OCP Policy Center in Rabat, Morocco.
- June 10, 2016: Deadline for sending publishable and formatted material.
- October 30, 2016: Publication of the seminar proceedings

Scientific Committee

- **Benhamouche Zoubir, Economist – United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa**
- **Idriss El Abbassi, Professor of Economics - Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco**
- **Karim El Mokri, Senior Economist – OCP Policy Center**
- **Adil EL Marhoum, Professor of Economics - Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco**
- **Lahcen Oulhaj, Professor of Economics - Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco**
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- **Said Tounsi, Professor of Economics - Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco**