

Proposed Action Plan for the Establishment of the Arab GOPAC Chapter

Executive Summary

The following is a proposed action plan for the establishment of an Arab GOPAC chapter (chapter). The action plan consists of three main components and an estimated budget for the establishment costs. The three components are institutionalisation, capacity building, and reform dialogues. The first component covers the establishment of the network amongst Arab parliamentarians and the institutionalization of a support office (secretariat) for the smooth functioning and sustainability of the chapter's activities. The second component proposes research on anti-corruption related legislation and good practices in the region, and capacity building activities for the members. The third component describes the establishment conferences of the chapter, which will be held in Lebanon, Kuwait, and Morocco respectively.

Institutionalisation

The institutionalisation component consists of strengthening the network of parliamentarians belonging to GOPAC from the Arab region, through contacting reform-minded MPs from region and the parliaments themselves to nominate representatives. The aim is to expand the network as the work materializes and the chapter establishes itself as an authority on the issue. The starting number of MPs attending the Beirut conference in September is 30-40, and will increase by ten new members to the following conferences in Kuwait and Rabat respectively. As the bulk of the members will be selected based on their reputation and track records in fighting corruption, they will set the tone of the chapter and be examples to follow by other and new members. The members will agree on a structure for the chapter, on whether and how a governing body will be responsible of coordinating its work.

The network will be supported by a dynamic secretariat, initially hosted by the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) in Beirut, which will provide logistic and technical support to the chapter in general and to its members on issues related to their membership. The secretariat will build and host a website for the chapter and will ensure communication amongst the members. The website will continuously be updated with the chapter's activities and relevant information and research. The secretariat will further organize the activities of the chapter such as its regular meetings and conferences. It will also coordinate the projects undertaken by the chapter and the regional research conducted under its supervision. The secretariat will report directly to the chapter or any governing body it chooses to form. Due to its experience and status as a chapter of Transparency International (TI), LTA is well placed to play this role.

Capacity and knowledge building

The modern approach to reform and combating corruption is relatively new in the region. Although there have been rich experiences throughout the Arab region, many of them have been individual and mostly undocumented. The legislative frameworks in most Arab countries are not free from laws and regulations that can be used to curb corruption or institute reform. However, due to political circumstances and lack of public awareness, such laws have either been ignored or un-implemented. Hence, it is important to provide GOPAC and its members with the necessary resources to map out such legislation and to document the good practices in the region in order to use them as tools for reform. This is undoubtedly a long process, which can be initiated by three pilot studies, conducted by legal and administrative experts, in three selected countries in the region. Each pilot study will be presented and discussed at one of the conferences for the establishment of the chapter.

On a broader level, it is necessary for the Arab GOPAC members to be acquainted with the international good practices and legislation aiming at curbing corruption. For this end, the chapter will provide its members with information on relevant international events and financial support to attend them whenever such support is not available from the events' organizers. The chapter will also fund exchange visits for its members to learn about parliamentary success stories in reform, both in the region and elsewhere.

Reform dialogues

In addition to mapping out the existing tools for curbing corruption, the need for introducing new legislation and reform tools to the region is also evident. For this purpose, the Arab GOPAC chapter will spearhead a dialogue amongst its members and in the region on needed reform legislation and tools to be adopted by the various parliaments represented in the chapter. Such tools include the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Access to Information laws and Conflict of Interest laws, amongst others. The establishment conferences will feature one or two reform issues, in addition to the discussions on the institutionalisation of the chapter.

The first establishment conference will be held in Beirut in the month of September. It will be organized alongside a workshop organized by Transparency TI and LTA on "Confronting Corruption in the Arab Region". Organizing the two events consecutively will initiate a dialogue between civil society representatives and the Arab parliamentarians and will contribute to the capacity building dimension of the project. In addition to the establishment and launch of the Arab chapter of GOPAC and its role in the fight against corruption, the first GOPAC conference will specifically address the United Nations Convention against Corruption that was signed and launched in Mexico in December 2003 and the role of Arab parliamentarians in promoting its ratification. The conference will also discuss the importance of pushing for Access to Information legislation and the first pilot study on existing anti-corruption laws. The second and third establishment conferences will be held in Kuwait and Rabat respectively at dates to be determined during the first conference.

Budget (2 years, US Dollars)

1- Institutionalisation	
- Full time coordinator salary	36,000
- Part time supervisor salary	30,000
- Furniture, equipment, rent, communications and sundries	30,000
2- Capacity and knowledge building	
- Researchers and consultants (pilot studies and new laws)	30,000
- International travel (members and consultants)	45,000
3- Reform dialogues	
- Establishment conference I (Beirut, 30 participants)	60,000
- Establishment conference II (Kuwait, 40 participants)	75,000
- Establishment conference III (Beirut, 50 participants)	90,000
TOTAL	296,000