



Call for papers — Submission deadline on October 22nd, 2021

1st Annual Central Bank Conference on Development Economics in the Middle East and North Africa

Macroeconomic Policy: Innovation and Challenges during Uncertain Times

Hosted by: Central Bank of Tunisia

Sponsored by: Regional Research Network of Central Banks in the MENA region and the World Bank MENA Chief Economist Office

Online conference, 1st and 2nd of December, 2021

The Regional Research Network of Central Bank Research Departments of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) welcomes submissions of research papers to be presented at the 1st Annual Conference on Development Economics in MENA. The theme of the conference is "Macroeconomic Policy: Innovation and Challenges during Uncertain Times."

Central banks have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis to mitigate their effects through accommodative monetary policy responses in environments characterized by constrained fiscal policy and high public debt in the MENA region. This new environment opens numerous questions on how to design monetary policy under uncertainty. Indeed, the growing risk of economic disruptions, both in the region and further afield, underlines the need to devise effective monetary policies to enable MENA countries to prepare for, withstand and recover from disasters. Furthermore, developments in fintech, blockchain, and digital currencies are offering both opportunities and challenges to central banks. By profoundly changing the world we live in, these innovations are forcing institutions like central banks to anticipate how high-tech financial solutions could enhance efficiency and outputs across a range of industries.

The Conference Scientific Committee is thus seeking economic research papers on but not limited to the following topics:

1. Conducting monetary policy in high debt environments.
2. Supporting growth and recovery in times of COVID-19.
3. The future of finance and implications of digital currencies.

While the Scientific Committee is looking for state-of-the-art research papers, the policy implications of the research conducted and analyses of policy responses in the above-mentioned themes are particularly appreciated.

The keynote speaker for the conference will be Carmen Reinhart, Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank Group.

The workshop will be opened by the Governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia. It will also include a policy panel with Central Bank Governors of the region on the Independence of Central Banks in a context of high public debt chaired by Ferid Belhaj, World Bank Vice President for Middle East and North Africa.

Interested authors should submit their papers via email at acbcd@worldbank.org.

The deadline for submitting a complete paper is on October 22nd, 2021. The authors of accepted papers will be notified by November 10th, 2021. Only authors of accepted papers will be notified.

Background on the Regional Research Network of MENA Central Banks

The conference is sponsored by a newly formed Steering Committee composed of officials from research departments of MENA central banks. The Committee is chaired by Roberta Gatti, Chief Economist of the MENA region of the World Bank Group. The Committee includes representatives from the Central Bank of Djibouti, the Central Bank of Egypt, the Central Bank of Jordan, the Bank of Lebanon, the Bank Al-Maghrib, the Palestine Monetary Authority and the Central Bank of Tunisia. It aims to increase the influential role of research in decision-making and to strengthen the collaboration between researchers from the World Bank, Central Banks, and academia in the MENA region.

The scientific committee is composed of Roberta V. Gatti, Chief Economist of the MENA Region at the World Bank; May Abulnaga, First Sub-Governor of the Governor's Office of the Central Bank of Egypt; Mohammad Atallah, Director of the Research and Monetary Policy Department at the Palestine Monetary Authority; Nedal Azzam, Research Department Executive Manager at the Central Bank of Jordan; Leila Baghdadi, Executive Board Member of the Central Bank of Tunisia; Daniel Lederman, Deputy Chief Economist of the MENA Region at the World Bank; Chucris Mouannes, Head of the Statistics & Economic Research Department at the Central Bank of Lebanon; Fatma Zohra Ouail, Director of Research at the Bank of Algeria; Mohamed Robert, Head of Studies at the Central Bank of Djibouti; Abdessamad Saidi, Director of Research at the Central Bank of Morocco; and Rachel Yuting Fan, Economist in the Office of the Chief Economist of the MENA Region at the World Bank.

Questions or comments about the submission of papers should be addressed to acbcd@worldbank.org.