

## **Social Outcomes Conference**

**September 9-10, 2021**

*Organized by Government Outcomes Lab  
University of Oxford, United Kingdom*

**Day 1 - September 9, 2021**

**11:30 - 13:30 (EEST)**

**Roundtable session:** Transforming public procurement? Issues of culture, outcomes, transparency, and learning in the UK Government's post-Brexit public procurement law reform proposals

**Chair:** Michael Bowsher QC

### **Presentation Abstract**

**by Lamia Moubayed Bissat and Basma Abdul Khalek - LEBANON**

### **Procurement for Prosperity: Lebanon's path towards efficiency, social value and transparency**

A large debate across policy hubs worldwide focuses on the strategic role of government procurement as a key instrument to achieving better value of taxpayers' money, but also to incorporating social value capturing broader opportunities for economic recovery and prosperity and ensuring open and free access to data for better transparency. This approach draws from the holistic thinking of the Triple Bottom Line 'Profit, People, Planet' by John Elkington in 1994, and the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

While countries across the world have achieved great milestones in turning procurement projects into concrete economic opportunities (new bidders' access to the market, innovation and creativity for start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, empowerment of vulnerable groups namely women) some others are dealing with inefficiencies, lack of competitiveness and compliance with international standards, inequalities, and vicious circles of fraud and corruption.

Lebanon is among developing countries that witnessed decades of bad procurement due to a purely administrative approach to how public money is spent to procure goods, works and services. The economic and financial crisis Lebanon is hardly undergoing since 2019, is nothing but the top part of an iceberg characterized by lack of procurement policies, absence of “value for money”, bad practices, and absolute absence of social value considerations. Representing 6.5% of GDP and 20% of public expenditures in Lebanon (accounted at central government level only due to lack of inclusiveness, integration and structured data); good public procurement is crucial to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives the country is striving for.

On the occasion of the CEDRE donors’ conference held in Paris in April 2018, the Government of Lebanon has committed to a holistic approach to public procurement as a key reform area to regaining citizens’ confidence in State institutions and the international community’s trust to support economic recovery. Procurement reform is one of the last resorts for ‘rebirth’ in a fragile country burdened by multi-folds crisis.

‘Procurement for Prosperity’ is the motto behind the policy work undertaken by the Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan – Ministry of Finance to reforming procurement. The first unified and modern procurement law was drafted grounded in evidence from the MAPS assessment of the procurement system performance, comparative analysis and benchmarks, and a large and inclusive stakeholders’ consultation process. The new procurement law, voted by the Lebanese Parliament on June 30, 2021, harmonizes procurement with international standards and guidelines and captures the essence of the international experience with adequate contextualization. A key reform tool, the law seeks efficiency in public spending and social value across procurement transactions and processes as ultimate goals of a whole-of-government, whole-of-economy and whole-of-society reform.

The presentation highlights the evidence-based policy making process to public procurement reform in Lebanon, as well as the institutional dynamics, national stakeholders’ engagement, and donor community commitment to supporting the country’s reform path. The presentation sheds light on the building blocks of the new procurement law and analyzes the ingredients for successful execution. Discussing Lebanon’s lessons learnt in procurement reform comes at a time a forward-looking implementation plan is being finalized laying the ground for smart and sustainable policy choices, modern institutional frameworks, professionalization, and synchronization among multiple players, to unlock the great potential of public procurement in achieving economic gains, social value and increased transparency and accountability.

## Speakers' Biographies



### **Lamia MOUBAYED BISSAT**

#### **President, Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan – Ministry of Finance, LEBANON**

She teaches Public Governance at Saint Joseph University - Beirut and Governance and Gender at American University of Beirut (AUB).

She advises on Agenda 2030 progress as member of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration, upon appointment by SG Antonio Guterres. She is Co-Chair of UN-CEPA since April 2021.

Her 20 years multidisciplinary experience in Lebanon, MENA region and with UN agencies is focused on sustainable development and quality of government with emphasis on public sector reform, budget transparency and public procurement.

She holds an M.Sc. degree from AUB and Professional Certificates in Strategic Policy Planning and in Strategic Management and Leadership from the UK.



### **Basma ABDUL KHALEK**

#### **Economist, Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan – Ministry of Finance, LEBANON**

For 10 years, she has been contributing to the Institute's mission in building strong institutions, through policy research and advocacy, capacity building and partnership building.

Since 2018, she joined the national team of specialists to work on Public Procurement Reform and coordinated the implementation of MAPS assessment and other initiatives leading to the procurement law enactment in June 2021. She is involved in formulating strategic orientations for reform implementation, ensuring stakeholders buy-in and raising awareness.

She holds a Master's degree in Public Governance in the Euro-Arab Region from University of Granada, Spain, and a BA in Economics from Saint Joseph University – Beirut. She completed Master's courses in Political Science at Saint Joseph University.