

YouMatch

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Employment Services for Youth

Guidelines for setting up local employment committees in West Africa



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YouMatch – Global Initiative on Innovative
Employment Services for Youth
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn, Germany

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de/en

Responsible:
Pierre Lucante
T +49 228 4460-1831
E pierre.lucante@giz.de

Author:
Ina Pietschmann
E ipietschmann@hotmail.com

Layout:
Atelier Löwentor GmbH
Dieburger Straße 98d
64287 Darmstadt, Germany
www.loewentor.de

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Abbreviations

ANAPEC	National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (Morocco)
ANAPEJ	National Youth Employment Promotion Agency (Mauritania)
ANPE	National Employment Agency (Benin)
CNPE	National Employment Promotion Commission (Algeria)
EIG	Economic interest group
LEC	Local employment committee
LWC	Local work committee (Tunisia)
PEC	Provincial employment committee (Morocco)
PELIMIR	Promotion of employment and occupational integration in rural areas (Mauritania)
PIEPC	Provincial (wilaya) intersectoral employment promotion committee (Algeria)
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

Preface

This document provides guidelines on setting up local employment committees (LECs) in West Africa with a view to improving services available to young people in rural areas.

It is the result of close collaboration and exchanges among the members of the YouMatch network community of practice on tailoring employment services to the specific needs of young people in rural areas. The YouMatch network is made up of approximately 90 employment service practitioners from 25 countries in Africa, the Middle East and North Africa who participate in interregional communities of practice. The community of practice involved in formulating these guidelines consists of representatives from institutions in Burkina Faso, Benin, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Togo who were also supported by the Department of Human Development of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Commission.

The guidelines are intended for decision-makers and policy-makers dealing with employment and for local groups and practitioners involved in developing a regional employment policy. They are also a useful resource on employment services for national decision-makers providing various examples of initiatives to create LECs, which have either been successfully completed or are currently in progress in different countries in West and North Africa.

1. Introduction

Employment remains a major challenge for West African countries, in spite of their sustained economic growth over the last eight years and real progress made in education and training.

The region is plagued by high unemployment and underemployment with rates in the WAEMU countries currently at 15.6% (14.4% for men and 17.3% for women). The labour market is characterised by considerable job insecurity, with a significant proportion of young people aged between 15 and 35 who are not in employment, education or training.

An analysis of the quality of employment reveals that 92% of jobs are in the informal economy. Even in the non-agricultural sector, nine out of ten jobs are informal. Job insecurity is also high at 72.1% (82.7% among women) and one in four workers are in precarious employment (Source: WAEMU, *Enquête régionale intégrée sur l'emploi et le secteur informel (Regional integrated survey on employment and the informal sector) 2017–2018*).

Taking regional specificities into account when formulating employment policies can provide a vehicle for improvement, enabling countries in this part of the world (as in some other developing countries) to become better equipped to face the challenges of rising unemployment and underemployment and widening regional inequality.

Deploying regional initiatives, in addition to national employment policies applied at the local level, is an approach that is both effective and appropriate; it enables an efficient and targeted local employment policy to be implemented, tailored to the needs and specific circumstances of a country's territorial units.

This is all the more so in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government response must be more regional and targeted in time and space in order to limit the pandemic's impact on employment and the economy's productive sectors at a time when economic growth in the region is forecast to contract sharply. In the WAEMU countries, for example, growth is expected to be almost halved in 2020 (2.7% compared to the initial projection of 6.6%).

Local players are best placed to evaluate the needs of local people, determine priorities, define action to be taken and decide on the best way to deliver appropriate employment services. Having a regional employment policy reflects a commitment to further strengthening geographical targeting and improving the effectiveness of measures and initiatives undertaken to promote employment and tackle unemployment. It also expresses a strong political will to transfer or delegate certain powers and responsibilities to decision-makers and groups that are closest to the target area.

This publication sets out core guidelines on the strategic and operational aspects of measures to roll out a regional employment policy by creating LECs. It aims to encourage employment decision-makers and policy-makers to engage in initiatives and reforms and adapt their national employment policies to each region's specificities and realities according to the needs and available resources and opportunities. It also seeks to give local players clear, practical advice on how to set up and manage LECs and provides guidance on risk and success factors to be considered.

The guidelines in this publication have drawn on successful experiences in various countries. They therefore reflect best practices and key lessons learned from the different projects, which local stakeholders can in turn apply and adapt to their national and local context. They do not provide a rigid one-size-fits-all model to be applied across all West African countries. Rather, they should be tailored to each country's political and economic context, taking into account its political structure (unitary, federal or regional state or confederation), the degree to which government action is decentralised and deconcentrated, and the institutional and organisational framework of its public employment services.

2. Context, purpose, objectives and composition of local employment committees

2.1 CONTEXT

Although any country's employment policy broadly follows a national approach, there is no denying that the regional dimension is gaining prominence in public debates on this subject. It is therefore important to enhance and adapt the national policy and tailor it to specific local conditions, or to formulate a truly regional public policy with a view to addressing the needs and expectations of target populations more effectively and meeting the challenges presented by changing job markets.

Regional public policies can take different forms depending on each country's context:

- Regionally developed policy: all the components of the employment policy (target populations, objectives, mechanisms, measures, financing, etc.) are determined independently by the region's players themselves, without necessarily referring to national guidelines or requiring central government's approval and endorsement. Based on the practices observed in various countries, this form of regionalisation is the exception.
- Regionally implemented policy: regional players are responsible for applying national policy and implementing plans and measures decided by central government, without any attempt to adapt or adjust them to local conditions. This is currently the most widespread form of regionalisation even though such a top-down approach often leads to poor results.
- Regionally adapted policy: there is a degree of leeway, within the limits and strategic choices established by central government, for regional authorities to tailor measures and tools to their region's realities and specificities.

These guidelines consider this to be the most suitable framework for setting up LECs.

This third form of regionalisation (regionally adapted policy) is generally implemented as part of the combined dynamics of decentralising and deconcentrating employment powers. The preferred sphere of action is 'local', with functions transferred from central government to local authorities and decision-making powers transferred from central government to the local or regional government offices.

It is therefore important to provide services and support that are adapted to the beneficiaries' expectations, reconciling the need for proximity with a constant quest for effective implementation of employment policy. This involves extending the powers of the regional authorities, broadening the local public authorities' economic and social responsibilities and giving those responsible for local public employment services more leeway when designing and implementing specific programmes.

These requirements give rise to a new way of operating, which requires transferring some employment policy development and implementation functions to the local and regional level as part of a framework of cooperation among various local groups, namely:

- representatives of local authorities: elected officials (decentralisation), appointed officials (deconcentration) and prominent figures in the community;

- the business community (private sector enterprises, professional associations and chambers, trade associations, etc.), which require access to a pool of qualified human resources;
- government employment services;
- vocational and higher education establishments, which must constantly adapt the training they offer to meet changing market needs;
- trade union organisations eager to ensure that labour law is applied effectively;
- civil society organisations working to reduce unemployment, improve the employability of people seeking work and help them find jobs;
- financial institutions looking for new businesses to finance.

The implementation of any regionally adapted employment policy also entails a shift in the positioning of public employment services, which must adapt and play a central facilitating/coordinating role and mobilise the above-mentioned groups to work together.

2.2 REMIT OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES

LECs are local bodies for dialogue, discussion, action and innovation aimed at promoting employment by pooling efforts, removing obstacles to practices and developing expertise in the regions to work together and create viable responses that address the concerns of young people and provide them with effective support for long-term labour market and social integration.

LECs can take various types of action:

- produce information on the local labour market;
- conduct regional assessments;
- identify skills requirements;

- implement and monitor local action plans;
- conduct foresight studies and make specific recommendations on developing the local economy and creating productive employment;
- set up and pilot local job creation schemes and business incubators;
- take direct action to help beneficiaries and businesses.

The scope of their remit varies according to the context, priorities and local realities in each country and the resources it is able to mobilise.

Figure 1. Potential remit of local employment committees



2.3 OBJECTIVES OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES

The purpose of LECs is to contribute to developing an institutional framework of multilateral dialogue to formulate local strategies that promote employment and create job opportunities and income-generating initiatives for local people.

They aim to bring key local players representing the public, private and civil society sectors around the same table in order to contribute to the development of the local economy, the creation of productive employment and the fight against unemployment and social and geographical inequalities.

2.4 STANDARD COMPOSITION OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES

The composition of LECs should be as representative as possible of the key players in the territorial unit in question.

Typically, a LEC will be made up of representatives of:

- public authorities, including ministries and local authorities (elected officials);
- public employment services (local employment agency);
- professionals, including employers and representatives of professional sector organisations and the most representative trade union organisations;
- development agencies;
- the local education, vocational training and higher education systems;
- civil society organisations working to support employment promotion and entrepreneurship;
- target groups that struggle to find work (for example, the long-term unemployed and job seekers);
- community leaders (experts and people qualified to address local employment and development issues).

Whatever the composition eventually decided on, it should be flexible, balanced and representative of the area in question and reflect a clear commitment to mobilising and engaging all available resources and capabilities. All the members of a LEC participate on an equal footing, without any distinction or hierarchy between the institutions represented.

The participation of beneficiaries or their representatives via local associations is an important aspect of the LEC creation process that should not be overlooked.

3. Process for setting up local employment committees

A review of the different experiences and projects involved in developing regional public action through the creation of spaces for dialogue and coordination, enabled a standard process to be established for setting up these bodies and putting them into operation, regardless of the country context and the specific features of the local labour market.

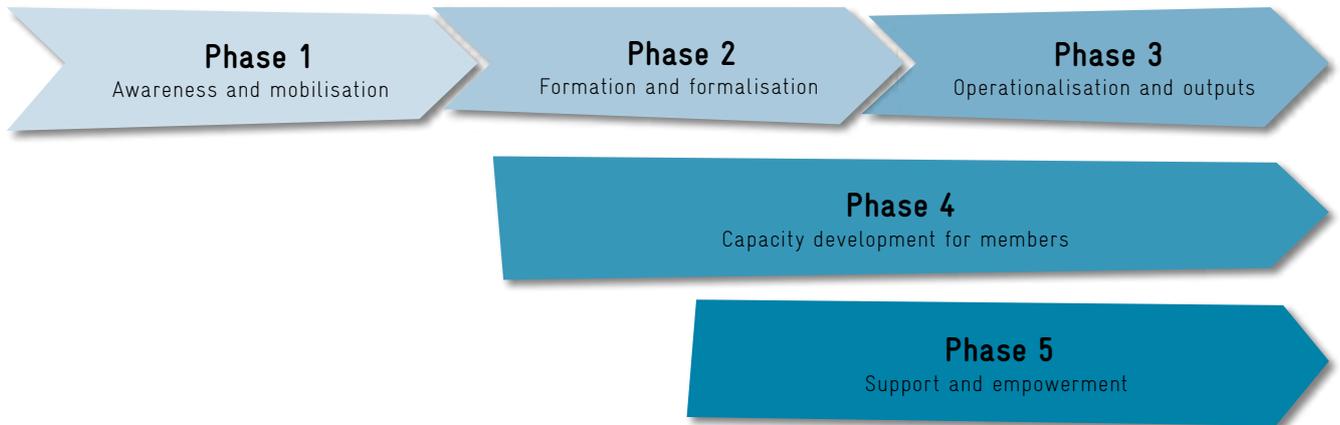
This process consists of a number of steps that can be divided into the following five phases:

- **Phase 1:** Awareness and mobilisation of local stakeholders
- **Phase 2:** LEC formation and formalisation

- **Phase 3:** Operationalisation and outputs
- **Phase 4:** Capacity development for LEC members
- **Phase 5:** LEC support and empowerment

The phases of the process generally follow the sequence shown in figure 2 below, although the order and nature of the steps (sub-phases) may vary from one country to another (see table 1), depending on the specific labour market conditions and geographical organisation.

Figure 2. Standard process for setting up local employment committees



It takes at least 12 months to implement the five phases of the process, with phases 4 and 5 carried out concurrently with phase 3.

To set up and ensure the effective operation of LECs, the necessary financial resources must be mobilised to cover the cost of each step in the process, namely:

- activities carried out or facilitated by members (organising workshops and knowledge-sharing events, which involves travel, meals and other expenses);
- capacity development and support, including external expertise and logistics (training venue, preparing and printing materials, refreshments, etc.).

Table 1. Steps in the standard process for setting up local employment committees

Phase	Steps			
Phase 1 Awareness and mobilisation	1.1 Meet with local authorities (governor, government employment service officers, high commissioners, prefects, mayors, traditional and religious leaders, etc.)	1.2 Hold bilateral meetings with the area's main players	1.3 Prepare the LEC's terms of reference (purpose, duties, operation, etc.)	1.4 Hold workshop to introduce the LEC strategy
Phase 2 Formation and formalisation	2.1 Conduct analysis of local stakeholders	2.2 Issue call for expressions of interest and select community stakeholders	2.3 Approve the final list of members	2.4 Formalise the formation of the LEC by order or agreement
Phase 3 Operationalisation and outputs	3.1 Organise the first LEC meeting	3.2 Prepare the LEC's charter (rules of procedure)	3.2 Formulate an action plan	3.3 Implement activities as per the plan and complete deliverables
Phase 4 Capacity development	4.1 Identify needs	4.2 Formulate the capacity-development plan	4.3 Implement capacity-development activities	
Phase 5 Support and empowerment	5.1 Assist members	5.2 Embed the approach in institutions	5.3 Mobilise financial resources	5.4 Formalise and standardise

Step 2.1 – the analysis of local stakeholders is crucial to the success of any attempt to set up a LEC. It involves analysing and understanding local decision-making mechanisms and bodies in order to identify which stakeholders should be mobilised, define their contribution and secure their long-term engagement.

The implementation of phases 4 and 5 requires external expertise, which can be mobilised as part of a pilot project covering a small number of territorial units (three areas).

Such a project could be implemented within the framework of international cooperation and serve as a trial run from which many lessons would be learned before rolling out the LEC strategy on a wider scale.

The pilot project would also provide an opportunity to determine the actual cost of deploying the LECs and establish a realistic operating budget that could possibly be financed by other entities and partners, particularly local authorities.

Implementing and empowering LECs requires mobilising financial, human and material resources that could, in the early stages, be provided by international donors and partners until the LECs themselves are able to mobilise sufficient national resources (internally and/or externally). This requires an important step in the process of creating LECs (step 5.3), which is to develop and implement a resource mobilisation strategy based on a variety of potential sources of financing available nationally and locally in each country, such as local

authorities, the local offices of government institutions, the private sector and foundations. The strategy will be implemented through a partnership framework enabling resources to be pooled to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

It is therefore important to identify what resources need to be mobilised to ensure the effective operation of LECs. This will largely depend on the scope of the functions assigned to them and the extent of in-kind contributions from members.

RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SET UP AND RUN LOCAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES EFFECTIVELY

Financial resources are required to fund the budget for all the costs and expenses relating to the LECs' activities, including the purchase and rental of material resources, operating expenses, travel expenses, salary expenses and fees for external experts, if needed.

The material resources needed to implement the planned activities include the facilities (rooms, premises, etc.), materials and equipment (computers, printers, etc.), software, tools, etc. These will be determined according to the activities and tasks to be carried out by the LEC and also the budget allocated to it, the desired quality and the deadlines set.

The human resources are the local staff mobilised as members of each LEC as well as the service providers and consultants involved in the LEC's activities on a permanent or ad hoc basis. Numbers will be determined by the workload and the qualifications and skills required to execute the different activities and tasks successfully.

Resource planning, mobilisation and optimisation are aspects that are crucial to ensuring the sustainability of LECs and should be taken into account from the very start of the pilot phase.

4. Key success factors

The purpose of creating LECs is to provide the areas in question with a space for multistakeholder dialogue, debate and the sharing of experiences and expertise on promoting employment, employability and economic development, with a focus on drawing on the diversity of their members and synergies to address the area's expectations and needs, which are identified by consensus.

The following can be considered key factors that contribute to the effectiveness, sustainability and successful evolution of LECs:

- Political support for employment promotion from local representatives of central government representatives and local elected officials.
- Choice of the geographical level at which the LECs will operate (province, municipality or employment zone¹). This must be a coherent geographical area that the stakeholders identify with and should, where possible, correspond to a single administrative level to avoid any overlapping of powers. Whatever geographical level is decided upon, it should reflect an appropriate division of the territory so that local labour market surveys and assessments may be conducted with a view to implementing tailored action plans and measures in each area.
- A diversity of member institutions and organisations, with well-balanced tripartite representation (public, private and civil society sectors) so that opinions and input are considered that encompass all sensitivities and opportunities.
- The number of members involved in the work should be limited to around 20 local stakeholders to ensure conditions are conducive to meaningful discussions.
- The members' level of responsibility and their capacity or ability to engage and make decisions, given that a certain degree of knowledge and an understanding of the benefits and constraints associated with promoting employment are required to ensure high-quality engagement and input. In order to work together to develop effective and innovative solutions, it is therefore crucial for representatives to be authorised to express their institutions' point of view and be given sufficient leeway to design and implement local initiatives.
- The LEC coordinator/facilitator's management skills and capabilities.
- The members' active and constant participation in order to build a climate of trust and transparency on policies. Regular attendance enhances ownership of the initiative and maximises the benefits of capacity-development activities.
- The availability of a pleasant dedicated space for all members, providing all the facilities and equipment required to hold meetings and workshops.
- A flexible LEC structural framework (composition, interfaces, functions, priorities, rules of procedure, etc.), which enables members to adapt constantly to new dynamics that arise as a result of organisational and institutional developments, policy shifts, the introduction of new regulations, the availability of financial resources and the launch of new key projects.
- The adoption of an action-oriented approach, which translates the findings of the surveys that have been conducted and the plans that have been formulated into organised and coordinated action in the target area. Attention must be paid to ensuring the necessary financial, material and human resources are available.

¹ An employment zone is a homogeneous geographical area forming a relatively independent local labour market where individuals can change jobs without necessarily having to move home and where businesses can find sufficient workers with the required skills.

- The appropriateness of the action plans undertaken in the target area, which must use reliable socio-economic data compiled from the assessments carried out. A monitoring and evaluation system must therefore be put in place to track the situation in the target area, the progress in implementing activities and their impact on the target groups, hence the importance of working with local experts and statistics offices.
- Mobilising sufficient resources to meet the objectives set and achieve the expected results. External expertise may also be needed to lighten the LEC members' workload and implement a specific plan to strengthen operational capacity.
- The quality of the capacity-development plan and training activities, which ensure that local stakeholders take ownership of the measures and the tools made available to them and understand their roles and the prerequisites for the success of the process of formulating a regionally adapted employment policy.
- The formalisation of LECs, giving them a clear and formal mandate, which must be shared in an easily readable format. This process must be accompanied by an organisational alignment of key stakeholders (alignment of organisational processes and procedures) to address the risks associated with working on a voluntary basis; specifically a drop in the stakeholders' medium-term and long-term motivation and involvement.

It is worth underlining the importance of considering cultural differences in certain regions or countries still burdened by a socio-cultural environment manifested by resistance to change. This can be overcome by gradually transforming the way public action is implemented, moving from a sector-based administrative culture to a project- and results-based approach agreed by all the parties involved.

A progressive roll-out is therefore strongly recommended, with a pilot phase launched in two or three target areas that will allow the approach to be adapted to local realities.

5. Success stories

Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia's successful experiences in setting up LECs are described below. These were all achieved through international cooperation and provide relevant ex-

amples of the organisational, functional and human aspects that have a bearing on the success and outcome of such initiatives.

5.1 PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES (MOROCCO)

Morocco's employment policy was originally formulated in a strictly national framework. However, over the last decade a more regional approach has begun to take root. This shift gained momentum when Morocco set in motion a process to establish a new 'advanced' regionalisation model, which was adopted in 2015.

A variety of initiatives have been carried out in different regions, provinces and municipalities aimed at promoting employment among vulnerable categories of people affected by unemployment by formulating regional strategies focused on economic and social development.

Provincial employment committees (PECs) have been set up against this backdrop and with technical support from German cooperation.² The main purpose of these committees is to establish and maintain a local dialogue on the labour market and employability, based on a sectoral assessment process.

These PECs are made up of the three main provincial groups directly or indirectly concerned with employment promotion or economic development in each province:

- the public sector (local offices representing government bodies);
- the private sector (businesses, professional associations, economic interest groups (EIGs) and trade associations and professional chambers);
- civil society organisations providing support to young people or promoting economic development in the province.

Civil society representatives are chosen in a selection process, following a call for expressions of interest.

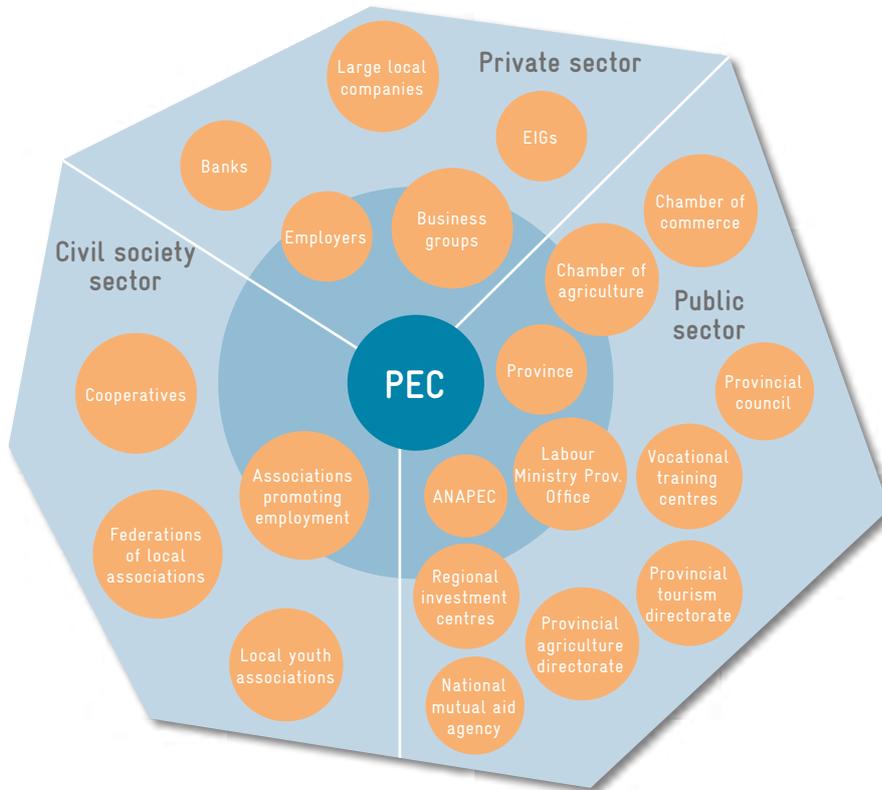
PECs are chaired by the governor of the province and have two tiers:

- **a decision-making tier** of provincial directors of ministerial departments, the directors of large private companies based in the province and the presidents of member entities;
- **an operational tier** of people with the required experience and expertise, appointed by the directors and presidents of member entities.

The PEC's decision-making tier meets at least three times a year, while the operational tier holds at least one meeting a month, convened by the chair.

² Promoting youth employment in rural areas (PEJ) – Phase I (2015–2017) and Phase II (2018–2020) – is a project implemented in two regions in Morocco for young people aged between 15 and 35.

Figure 3. Map of stakeholders belonging to PECs



Functions of the decision-making tier

The PEC's decision-making tier has the following main functions:

- promote the creation of a space for local dialogue on the labour market and economic development in the province;
- converge, coordinate and pool the efforts of provincial stakeholders to promote employment and economic development;
- foster dialogue, consultation and partnerships on employment promotion and economic development among the different stakeholders at the provincial level;
- provide strategic guidance on employment promotion and economic development in the province;
- validate the province's employment promotion action programmes formulated by the PEC's operational tier;
- facilitate the implementation of employment promotion action programmes in the province;
- monitor implementation of the programmes in the province;
- ensure there is periodic reporting on the labour market's situation in the province.

Functions of the operational tier

The PEC's operational tier has the following functions:

- maintain a dialogue on growth industries among the different stakeholders at the provincial level and on measures to be implemented in the areas of employment promotion and development;
- plan and conduct regular sectoral assessments of employment in the province;
- consolidate existing studies, data and information on the province;
- create a shared databank and update it regularly to facilitate the production of sectoral assessments and decision-making by the PEC's decision-making tier;
- mobilise external support, if necessary, and draw up terms of reference;
- draw up action programmes and prepare the priority measures to be implemented to improve youth employability and boost economic development in the province for the PEC's decision-making tier;
- ensure the PEC's decision-making tier reports periodically via a dashboard tracking the progress of sector assessments and the action programmes being implemented.

PEC operation and the engagement of local partners

PECs are governed by an order issued by the governor of the province or an agreement between the core PEC institutions (province, provincial council, provincial employment office, the local office of the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC) and civil society and private sector representatives). The governor sends written invitations to non-permanent members to join the PEC.

The governor of the province or an appointed representative chairs the PEC. The local ANAPEC office is responsible for PEC facilitation and coordinates with the Social Action Division or the Economic Affairs and Coordination Division to host the secretariat.

The sectoral assessments of the labour market (one of the PECs' main activities) are carried out by the PEC members according to the agreed division of tasks.

All PEC members undertake to:

- appoint a resource person to take part in all the PEC's work in both tiers;
- share data, studies and expertise on their respective areas of action;
- share their network of stakeholders and partners.

BOX 1 LEGAL BASIS

In institutional terms, there is as yet no legal basis for the creation of PECs as the Decentralisation Act only addresses regional employment.

Under the current legal framework, a PEC can only be set up as a **voluntary body** according to a decision of the governor (governor's order) or at the provincial level under a multistakeholder agreement that establishes its purpose, expected results and the resources allocated.

Lessons learned

The Moroccan initiative to set up LECs has so far resulted in the creation of nine PECs. The results and the committees' performances vary from one province to another, largely due to differences in:

- the local decision-makers' level of engagement, particularly the governor as chair of the PEC, whose assistance and support are critical to achieving the PEC's objectives;
- the PEC coordinator/facilitator's degree of involvement and motivation, a role performed by the director of the local ANAPEC office, which hosts the PEC's secretariat;
- the managerial skills of the PEC's coordinator/facilitator, who must act as an effective agent for change, uniting the committee members, building cooperative relationships with and among them and creating a positive climate;

- each PEC member's level of sustained mobilisation and effective participation;
- the ability of the members in the operational tier to reconcile their professional responsibilities with PEC work carried out on a voluntary basis;
- the level of awareness among the local community.

The main factor determining the sustainability and effectiveness of a mechanism such as the PEC is the ability to maintain the long-term commitment of local stakeholders and their capacity to act.

PECs are being extended throughout the country, suggesting that this is the start of a long process of developing a regional approach as a key lever for the socio-economic inclusion of young people.

5.2 PROVINCIAL INTERSECTORAL EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION COMMITTEES (ALGERIA)

In response to the challenges of improving employment opportunities for young people, the Algerian Government has launched a number of national programmes and mechanisms to promote youth employment, such as the Employability Support Scheme (DAIP) and the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ) scheme. A host of mechanisms have also been set up to provide microcredit to young job seekers. Although these initiatives have contributed to reducing the unemployment rate, they cannot on their own solve the jobless problem and ease the economic difficulties faced by the population, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

Employment policy is formulated with input from advisory coordination and evaluation bodies, which were set up in 2010.³ They consist of the National employment promotion commission (CNPE) and, at the local level, provincial (wilaya) intersectoral employment promotion committees (PIEPCs).

³ Executive decree on the creation, organisation and operation of the CNPE.

Each PIEPC is chaired by the governor of the province (wali) or their representative and is made up of:

- local representatives of the ministry departments, which form part of the CNPE;
- provincial labour inspectors;
- head of the provincial employment agency;
- director of the local office of the National Youth Employment Support Agency;
- director of the National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC);
- coordinator of the National Microfinance Management Agency (ANGEM);
- local representative of the National Investment Development Agency (ANDI).

The members of a PIEPC are appointed by order of the province's governor to a four-year term and meet once a quarter in ordinary session. Meetings are convened by the chair, and the secretariat is hosted by the provincial employment directorate.

In the context of the functions assigned to the CNPE, PIEPCs are responsible for:

- implementing the CNPE's policy guidelines and decisions;
- monitoring the implementation of employment promotion programmes and activities;
- proposing measures to improve public employment promotion programmes;
- developing local employment promotion initiatives, taking into account each province's specific characteristics;
- collecting information and statistics on employment.

The evaluation work carried out to date on the performance of some of the PIEPCs has revealed shortcomings in their operation, which prevent them from positioning themselves as effective spaces for solving problems and engineering solutions for promoting employment at the local level. These failings include:

- a lack of leadership within the committees and the absence of a clearly identified secretariat to manage their work;
- the lack of a culture and social dialogue on the region within PIEPCs, or a wider dialogue with stakeholders on employment issues at the local level;
- narrowing of the functions of PIEPCs to simply reporting on the employment situation and suggesting activities to be implemented;
- lack of ownership of the concept of employment promotion committees and an incomplete and vague understanding of the provisions in the decree on how they operate;
- lack of a strong public-private partnership to enable PIEPCs to outsource some studies or activities to local or national consulting firms to help them fulfil their functions effectively.

To remedy these shortcomings, the project Youth Empowerment and Employment in the wilayas of Adrar and Medea was launched as part of a broader partnership programme between Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is now in its second phase (2018 to 2020), following completion of the first phase which ran from 2014 to 2016.

This project, which has as one of its aims support for the local employment promotion coordination mechanism, identified the need to strengthen the capacities of the local committee and improve its effectiveness, with a view to achieving optimal performance in organisational and functional terms (composition, decision-making process, completion times, etc.) and scheduling activities and addressing issues (agenda, needs assessments, reporting, process of developing solutions to the problems identified, etc.).

One of the project's outstanding features is the implementation of a major training plan aimed at strengthening the knowledge of local stakeholders and providing them with the operational tools they need to play a full role in promoting employment, particularly youth employment, in local development programmes.

This training plan focuses on governance, a labour market analysis based on full assessments, regional planning, and the monitoring and evaluation of employment promotion programmes as part of local development policies.

5.3 LOCAL WORK COMMITTEES (TUNISIA)

In a difficult economic climate marked by low growth, the Tunisian economy is struggling to create enough jobs to absorb the flow of new people entering the labour market. This economy's structural inability to meet the growing demand for jobs in the aftermath of the shocks suffered by the economy in recent years (global crisis and political upheavals) has led to widening regional inequality and rising unemployment, which has become a structural problem affecting all categories of young people.

To address these challenges, the Tunisian Government decided to adopt a new multidimensional, cross-cutting employment strategy, encompassing all the levers for creating decent jobs and involving a broad range of players in the employment sphere.

In this context, regional action plans for youth employment were developed in three governorates as part of the project Economic Development and Regional Action Plan for the Creation of Decent Jobs for the Youth in Tunisia.⁴

These regional action plans are a reference point for all employment promotion activities in the governorates and serve as a roadmap at the local, national and international level. They set out all the strategic and operational actions for improving the youth employment situation.

A local work committee (LWC) develops and approves each regional action plan. The members, who are appointed by the governor of the area concerned, include those in the public sector and representatives of employers, workers, associations and young people.

The LWCs developed the plans over a period of four to six weeks, following a series of meetings led by local facilitators under the direct supervision of key facilitators. This local participatory initiative resulted in strong ownership of this approach of promoting local economic development to create jobs, the spread of a new culture of a regional dimension to public policies and the establishment of a central-local dialogue. The ownership was further reinforced by an extensive capacity-development programme for the members of the local committees throughout the project implementation period.

The examination and analysis of reports produced under the project provided useful lessons and insight into the different aspects of setting up new LWCs. The main findings were as follows:

- stimulating a constructive and decentralised local dialogue is a feasible way of increasing cooperation among local partners and thereby improving the youth employment situation;
- support for decentralised dialogue, self-assessment, ownership and the active participation of local stakeholders helps to create local momentum, meet local expectations and implement a fully decentralised job creation model;

⁴ Project financed by the Netherlands with technical assistance from the International Labour Organization.

- adopting a participatory approach, granting LWCs their own prerogatives and a degree of leeway and ensuring regular and effective communication and knowledge sharing are all very effective ways of encouraging partner organisations and bodies to become involved;
- training and capacity development are some of the key factors in ensuring sustainability;
- implementing the plans contributes to ensuring that the level of motivation and involvement of LWC members remains high.

The sustainability of the LWCs cannot be achieved in the medium term without an extensive support process.

6. Initiatives in progress

This last section provides an overview of a number of initiatives identified in countries represented in the community of

practice. These initiatives are being implemented to set up similar bodies to the LECs in Senegal, Mauritania and Benin.

6.1 PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE CENTRES (SENEGAL)

As a step forward in the decentralisation process, in September 2017, the Senegalese Government decided to set up a local youth employment and entrepreneurship centre in each municipality. The purpose of these centres is to optimise employment promotion strategies and tools.

The Ministry of Employment will therefore implement a programme for local employment initiative centres, which involves setting up local employment and entrepreneurship centres to promote employment and actively tackle unemployment and underemployment, with a focus on strengthening cooperation among central government, local authorities, civil society and technical partners.

Purpose

The local employment and entrepreneurship centres provide public community employment services hosted by the department authorities. The centres are created and managed by the Ministry of Employment in partnership with the local authorities and are financed by both of them with support from partners and donors. There is an emphasis on developing synergies and commonalities with groups operating locally and drawing on local resources and potential.

They have a three-fold goal.

1. Strategic goal, which aims to:

- formulate and coordinate local employment policy;
- consolidate the local action plan for employment;
- operate a local employment information management system.

2. Operational goal, which consists of:

- receiving job offers and requests and ensuring that they are widely publicised;
- increasing possibilities for work based on local opportunities and levers;
- responding to the need for information on the local job market;
- connecting jobseekers with jobs;
- supporting vulnerable people through close monitoring mechanisms.

3. Complementary goal to:

- facilitate access to social welfare benefits, training, housing, land, financial and non-financial services, etc.

Objectives

The overall objective of the local employment and entrepreneurship centres is to increase the regional nature of Senegal's employment policy and enhance the overall synergy to draw on links between economic growth and job creation. More specifically, the centres aim to:

- strengthen the appeal of the regions by promoting sources of employment, employment zones and entrepreneurship;
- tackle unemployment, underemployment and discrimination;
- undertake targeted efforts to address the determinants of irregular labour migration.

Operation

The local employment and entrepreneurship centres operate through two bodies.

1. The steering and policy committee, which is responsible for:

- defining the programme's strategic directions;
- validating the annual work plan and corresponding budget at the start of each year;
- approving the activity report and financial report for the previous year;
- validating technical partnership agreements (with sector programmes) and institutional and financial partnership agreements;
- conducting field monitoring trips.

2. The local employment committee, which is responsible for:

- formulating the local employment plan and preparing a monitoring report every six months for the steering and policy committee;
- examining and adopting the annual work plan that sets out the schedule of activities for the year according to the local employment plan.

The pilot phase for implementing the local employment and entrepreneurship centres currently covers four departments (Guediawaye, Kaolack, Sedhiou and Diourbel), and there are plans to extend them to all 45 of Senegal's departments by 2023.

This initiative is facing a number of challenges concerning the long-term mobilisation of sufficient financial resources, the institutional context, labour market regulation and administrative reforms.

6.2 PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE IN THE BRAKNA REGION (MAURITANIA)

Under its Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity Strategy (SCAPP 2017-2030), the Mauritanian Government made the promotion of employment, particularly youth employment, a priority goal to boost inclusive economic development.

In light of these strategic directions, a national employment strategy was formulated for the period from 2018 to 2030, with input from the Ministry of Employment, Youth and Sports and the country's business community. It is based on four priority pillars:

- (i) putting employment at the centre of national economic policy and sector policies;
- (ii) strengthening public employment and placement services;
- (iii) guiding human capital development according to a rationale centred on economic demand;
- (iv) developing the employment governance framework.

It is in this context that the Promotion of employment and occupational integration in rural areas (PELIMIR 2016 to 2021) project is being implemented. It aims to support the Mauritanian Government in its national employment strategy, which focuses on young people in rural areas. The project is financed by German cooperation and seeks to tackle the problem of youth unemployment in rural parts of the country.

The PELIMIR project is set to take the first steps in creating a provincial employment committee in the Brakna region in close collaboration with the National Youth Employment Promotion Agency (ANAPEJ) and in partnership with the Ministry of Employment.

The aim of the committee is to:

- mainstream the employment issue at the provincial level;
- propose youth employment promotion measures at the provincial level;
- create a space for multi-stakeholder dialogue and exchanges.

The committee will be formed of representatives of:

- the public sector: regional authorities, ANAPEJ and the local offices of the departments responsible for the different sectors;
- the private sector: employers' confederation, chambers of trade, professional bodies and local businesses;
- civil society: associations concerned with employment promotion or young people, associations of unemployed young people, NGOs, technical and financial partners and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Mauritania (CCIAM).

6.3 DECENTRALISED PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT (PADE) PROGRAMME (BENIN)

Benin's National Employment Agency (ANPE) is implementing the Decentralised Partnership for Employment programme, which targets municipalities and seeks to develop employment policies at the municipality level.

Employment coordinators have been put in place in some municipalities to perform the role of relaying information from ANPE to the local level. To help them become effective employment promotion institutions, ANPE supports them by carrying out activities to improve their technical expertise and by providing them with computer equipment and tools.

This experience should be closely monitored and supported, with a view to consolidating it and extending it to all 77 of the country's municipalities.

