



Arab Centre for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity
MENA Commercial Law Strengthening Project

Methodology Guide for the first national report on the state of commercial laws

Introduction

In the context of the “MENA Commercial Law Strengthening Project”, the Arab Center for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity (ACRLI) has developed this guide to assist the national teams in each of the project’s pilot countries (United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Lebanon and Yemen) in the process of drafting the first national report on the state of commercial laws, through setting a standard methodology for him/her to follow that is consistent with the scientific and professional standards employed by ACRLI.

The expected objective of the report is to present an analytical study that provides a clear and focused picture on the state of commercial and business law in the pilot countries, and allows the process of examining the relevant texts, in theory and practice, and analyzing the legal and economic system in general, with a view towards assessing the contribution of these frameworks in achieving economic growth and in promoting a business enabling legal environment.

Bearing this in mind, and in order to assist and facilitate the work of the national teams and ensure maximized coherence between the different national reports that will be presented, this guide has been developed to explain the different steps and methodology for the elaboration of the national report and to provide focused information on the proposed structure and outline to be adopted. This guide will secure a proper investment of the capabilities of the national teams in such a way in a scientific way that conforms with the objectives and expected results of the project.

Experience has shown that the development of such a guide is an essential component for a proper and methodical collection and analysis of data, especially when done at a regional level. Thus, such a guide shall facilitate the work of the national teams and provides them with an analytical and systematic approach that allows for a comprehensive assessment of the commercial and business laws in their country and serves as a gateway for a better understanding of the state of investment. This guide will also benefit all concerned parties, such as lawyers, policy makers and practitioners, through unifying the technical methodology that will be adopted by the national authors and facilitating the comparative assimilation of the contents of all the reports, thus building on them in the development of the theme-specific studies, at a later stage. The guide will also allow the integration of all the national reports in the regional comparative report that is expected to provide comparative analyses and present an overview of the regional development of commercial laws in the MENA region.

Notwithstanding its importance, this guide is not enough, by itself. The achievement of high quality national reports requires another set of “tools of success”, such as: (1) the efficiency of the national team and its commitment to high standards of professionalism and objectivity; (2) the concerted action and coordination between the members of each national team (the author, the advisor and the assistant) through the use of background papers in order to support and promote knowledge and exchange ideas and experiences, whether legal, economic, financial or else; (3) the national team’s keen to engage with him in consultation and discussion several local actors, especially the concerned government agencies (relevant ministries and official institutions), the trade unions and lawyers, as well as economic and trade bodies from the private sector (chambers of commerce, industry, trade unions and relevant professional bodies). The participation of these local actors in the drafting of the report is of a great importance and constitutes strong support for the project, especially since the ultimate objective is to propose reforms; a thing which can only be achieved through the participation and involvement of the active actors in the society.

It is essential to point out to the importance of conforming to this guide as a first step in the achievement of high quality reports, which constitute an important example of scientific research and serve as a good reference for those concerned in law and development, while preserving a fair margin of autonomy to the national team. In view of all the above, the guide has been divided as follows:

- First Section:** The executive steps and methodologies that must be followed
Second Section: The structure of the national report i.e. the basic outline of the contents
Third Section: The Annexes

Beirut, 28-07-08

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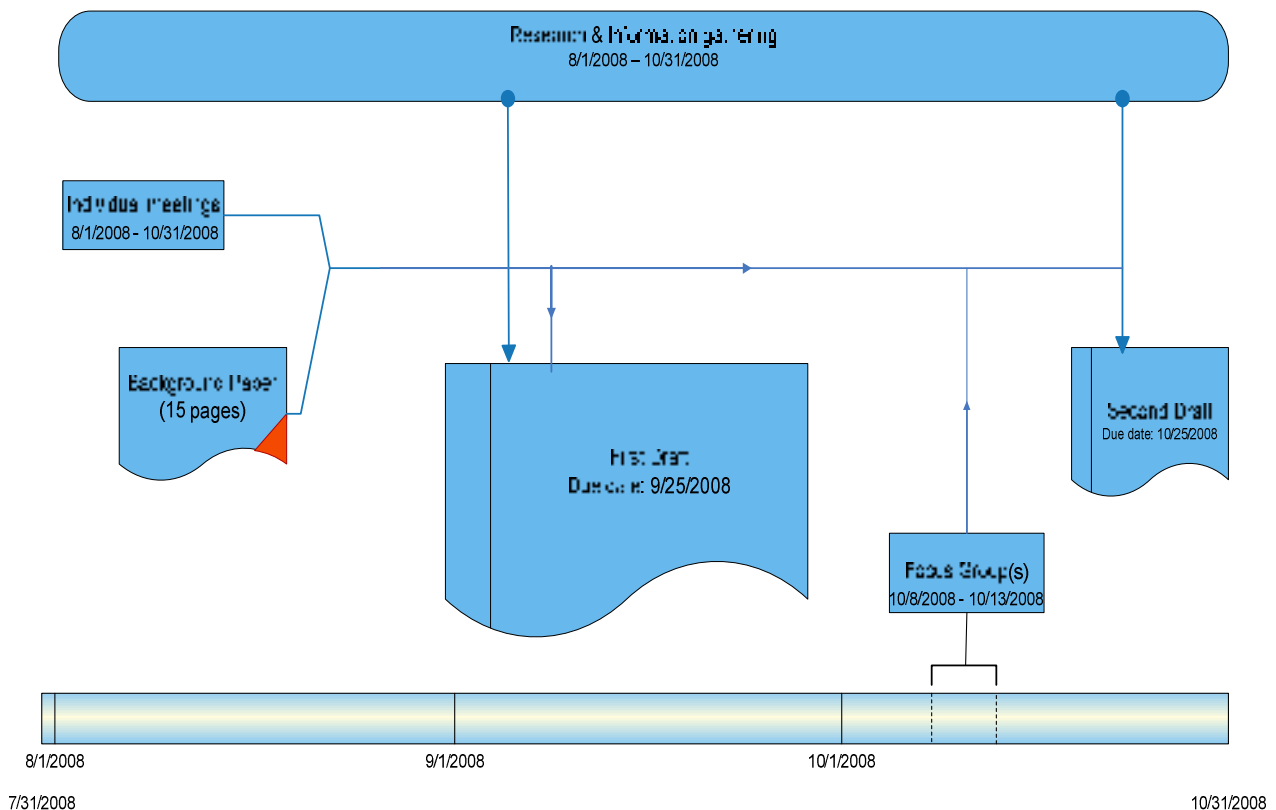
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First Section

The Executive Steps and Methodologies

This section of the Manual provides an overview of the required steps and methodologies to complete the National Report. According to the flowchart below, the first step in preparing the Report is Research and Information Gathering, with a view towards developing a more concise idea on the subject of the report and the available resources for the national team. Upon concluding the first phase of information gathering, the national author resorts to individual interviews that aim at enhancing his/her knowledge through exchanging ideas and familiarizing with the opinions of prominent concerned figures in the fields of commerce, business, and law. In parallel, a background paper(s) that provide focused information on the economic, monetary, and investment situations in the country and their linkages with the existing legislation and policy, shall be elaborated to be later integrated in the National Report. Upon the termination of all these steps, the first draft of the report will be elaborated and later discussed by one or more focus group(s). These focus groups shall bring together no more than eight (8) prominent figures concerned with the theme of the report, with a view towards suggesting amendments. Afterwards, the national author shall develop the second draft of the report in order to present it and discuss it during the national workshop, organized by the national team, which will bring together forty or more prominent figures that present the various concerned parties in the fields of commerce, development, economics, banking, and law from the private and public sectors. The purpose of the workshop is to solicit additional opinions and remarks on the second draft, as well as to launch the report and highlight its importance.



Step 1: Research and Information gathering

It is important to commence the research and information gathering process in early August 2008, while insuring the continuity of this process throughout the duration of the project in order to update the collected and newly-added information.

- **What is the purpose of information gathering?**

The collection of information is the most important step in the formulation of the report. It is so, since it is the preliminary stage of developing a clear and focused picture on the legislative/economic framework(s) in the country, and it serves as the basic source for feeding the report and providing it with accurate and documented information and data. Moreover, the information that will be gathered by the national team for the purpose of the National Report formulation might also be used in the development of the other outputs of the project, namely the in-depth study and the workshop's documents, all of which reveals the importance of an accurate, methodical and documented research.

It is important to note that all the information that will be gathered shall be used and published on the website of the Arab Center in the form of a compendium that contains the laws, regulations, and other resources that interest legal persons, investors and business persons in the Arab region.

- **What information must be gathered?**

The information that the national team is expected to collect for the completion of the first report includes,

- (1) **Official texts** such as laws, decrees, ministerial and administrative decisions, and official reports issued by the government and the administration.
- (2) **Studies, books and reports** issued by the universities, experts, international bodies, NGOs, research centers, Bar Association , economic and statistical companies, whether from electronic sources and databases or from tangible sources.

It is important to note the importance of checking and browsing the Electronic Database on the Arab legislation and Regulations, which was developed by the Arab Centre for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity (ACRLI) and contains all the texts and laws in Arab countries. The data base is accessible through the website: www.arabruloflaw.org

- **What is the Mechanism for information gathering and communication?**

Sufficient data on the type and source of the information collected and gathered must be retained for the purpose of packaging and documentation, bearing in mind the preservation of intellectual property rights and the archiving of all the work. A comprehensive list of all references must be maintained and saved digitally, as well as in the form of hard copies.

The list and the copies are expected to be sent electronically by email or copied on CDs and sent by express regular mail to the ACRLI once at the end of each month.

It is expected that the national report contains in its core and end bibliographical references to the sources of information.

- **Documentation of research results**

Upon the end of each month, the national team is expected to provide ACRLI with all the references that have been collected, together with a research report that highlights the results of the research. This report is divided into an introduction explaining the goal of the research, the person who conducted it, and the duration of time required for its completion, followed by three sections (1) a description of the sources of the collected documents and the methods adopted to obtain them, and (2) a brief description of the content of the collected documents, and (3) an assessment of the collected documentation along with identifications of the primary, preferred references used to support the writing of the report (**See below the attached research report template, document n. 1**)

Step 2: Individual interviews

Through out the process of information gathering, and before completing the first draft of the report, the national author must contemplate the involvement of prominent personnel in the process of developing the report. This is accomplished by conducting individual interviews who will help consolidate the report and enhance the cooperative relationship with these personalities. In addition to the added scientific value they will accumulate additional understanding the legislative needs of their countries. The individual interviews should start taking place early August 2008 and may continue in parallel with the writing of the second draft of the report, i.e. at the end of October 2008.

- **The concept and purpose of individual interviews**

Individual interviews are important means that enrich any written work especially if the author aspires to adopt a scientific methodology of a high technical level to reach the best results and that are closest to objectivity. Individual interviews are organized events between one or more of the members of the national team and prominent economic, legal and social personalities who are active in the public and the private fields in the country who is considered a useful reference for the written work. The interviewed person may be a minister or a high-level official, a judge or a significant social figure. It is usually resorted to individual interviews in the cases where there are political and/or social considerations that require a private meeting.

The purpose of individual interviews is either to complement certain information obtained by means of regular research, or to understand the person's views on certain substantive issues related to the report. Moreover, individual interviews introduce the project to concerned experts and stakeholders as well as involves them in its pillars and activities.

The individual interviews, thus, allow the national author to meet persons who are not available in or normal circumstances or regular events (focus group meetings) and permit him to exploit all the necessary time to gather the requested information.

- **The mechanism of individual interviews**

- Setting the goal: A clear objective must be defined when deciding who should be interviewed individually, in other words, the expected result must be priorly identified.
Selecting participants: the person(s) intended to be interviewed must be chosen based on defining the goal.

- Selecting participants: the person or persons intended to be interviewed must be chosen based on defining the goal.
- Contacting the participants: This is done through the preparation of an invitation letter that includes a description of the project, the purpose of the interview, and a series of brief focused questions. It is preferable to attach the letter to some project documents or other documents that encompass information which serves the purpose of the meeting. Ideally, the letter should be sent two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date in order to allow time for participants to prepare for the meeting. It might be useful to follow up the invitation letter with a phone call, especially in cases where the national author, advisor or assistant has a personal contact with the intended person to be interviewed.
- Meeting Report: The interview must be documented, according to the template developed by the ACRLI (See below the attached document n. 2)

Step 3: Develop an economic background paper

The development of the national report relies on an economic background paper that should be drafted by the national advisor or other parties assigned by the national team for this purpose. It shall provide an overview on the economic situation and policy in the country as well as other related information that can contribute to the assessment of the commercial legal framework, its role in achieving growth and encouraging investment in the country.

- **What is the purpose of the background paper?**

The background paper, developed by a prominent figure in the field of business and commerce, contains objective and empirical information and data. It should also provide an in-depth economic/developmental analysis on the country's status from an investment point of view. The background paper provides support to the author, since the latter can use and build on it in his/her analysis process of laws and regulations.

It is useful to point out that the national author can use the background paper as per his/her discretion by curtailing or modifying it or using specific sections according to the report's needs. The background paper should not exceed 15 pages (See below the attached document n. 3)

Step 4: Writing the first draft

Based on the information gathering process and its outcome, including the minutes of the individual interviews (completed to date), and the building on the background paper, it would be preferable to commence in writing the first draft no later than August 27, 2008, and according to the proposed structure in the Second Section of this guide. The national author is expected to finalize the first draft by September 25, 2008 and send it to the ACRLI in Beirut via email.

- **Content of the report:**

The national author will take in charge the drafting and elaboration of the national report, while employing (1) the research report and the results of the information gathering, (2) the economic background paper, (3) other background papers – if any- which are focused and concise and are

prepared by the advisor(s) upon the author's request, (4) consultations provided by national and/or international advisors, (5) the feedback of ACRLI , and (6) the results of individual interviews.

- **Format of the report:**

While drafting the report, it is preferred to consider the following form principles:

1. Number of pages: The report's size must range in pages between 35 and 40 (excluding the cover page and attachments of the report).
2. The font that shall be used for printing the report is "Simplified Arabic".
3. The font size that shall be used for printing the report is "13".
4. Quoting: All the quotations must be clearly demonstrated by being placed within quotation marks so as to avoid any such turmoil or confusion which could lead to a breach of intellectual property laws.
5. References: All references which will be used during the drafting of the report must be numbered; that is to facilitate referring to them when used in the body of the report. This can be done by noting the reference number without all the relevant information about the Repertory (**See below template, document n. 4**)
6. Documentation: It is very important to quote all the used references in the margins of the report, by mentioning the number of the reference and its related page number.

Step 5: Focus Groups

The national team is expected to organize a focus group meeting during the period between the 8th and 13th of October, 2008, whereby a group of experts and representatives of concerned national actors is invited to present observations and comments on the first draft of the national report, with an outlook towards revising it and eventually developing an amended second draft. If the national team deems another meeting necessary, it can organize another focus group.

- **Concept and Purpose of the Focus Groups:**

Focus Groups are considered important means that enrich any written work especially if they aspire to adopt a scientific methodology of a high technical level as well as opt for the integration of the experts' views in order to reach the best and most objective results. In addition they are expanded scientific gatherings organized between the national team and a group of eminent experts who are considered an important source of information and ideas that will enrich the written work.

The main purpose of the Focus Group is either to complement certain information obtained by means of regular research, or to take notice of the various views on certain substantive issues which the national Author intends to address, or to reveal certain controversies, all of which will assist the national team to initiate the writing process in a better and more effective way. Moreover, Focus Groups introduce the project to concerned experts and stakeholders and involves them in its pillars and activities. Actually, focus groups gain additional significance since they provoke the minds of participants and stimulate the debate in a way that allows the comparison and discussion of numerous topics and controversies, and thus facilitate obtaining distinctive results in their scientific value and analytical depth.

Thus, despite the fact that they use different means and operate on different scopes, individual interviews and focus groups have similar goals that intersect in terms of seeking the maximum amount of additional information, on one hand, and updating the existing information and exchanging knowledge and experiences on the other.

- **Mechanisms of the Focus Groups:**

1. Defining the objective. It is important to clearly define the objective behind organizing the Focus Group; i.e. the intended result that the National Team contemplates to achieve from this meeting.
2. Selecting participants. Based on the defined objective, the participants to the focus group are identified and selected.
3. Contacting participants. This is done through preparing a standard and clear letter which includes a quick description of the project and the aim of the meeting in addition to a series of brief questions focused to allow the guests to prepare for a debate that would lead to constructive results. Preferably, the mentioned letter should be attached with the project documents or any other documents that serve the purpose of the meeting, while preserving simplicity and orientation upon providing information. It is recommended to allow two weeks between the invitation and Focus Group date, in order to provide time for participants to prepare. It might also be useful to follow up the letter of invitation through telephone calls, especially where a member of the national team is personally acquainted with the invitee.
4. A Focus Group minutes of meeting. All discussions and their outcomes must be documented in a brief record, according to a model developed by ACRLI (**See below template, document n. 5**)

In order to ensure the success of the focus group and expand the possibility of its utilization, it is useful to start preparing for it three weeks prior to its date, by inviting representatives of concerned official bodies and legal personnel (lawyers, judges, law professors, etc.) in addition to representatives from the private sector

Step 6: writing the second draft

Based on the process of information gathering and the results obtained from the individual interviews, and the Focus Group(s), the Author begins developing the second draft of the report in compliance with the proposed structure in Section II of this guide in order to send it to ACRLI in Beirut no later than October 25, 2008.

The formulation of the second draft requires the same methodology that was used in the first draft whether in terms of form or content (see Step 4).

Second Section

Structure and Design of the Report

This structure forms an integral part of this Guide that was developed to assist in the preparation of the national reports on the status of commercial laws in the four pilot countries. The adherence to this structure is a key element to the success of this important scientific effort, since it facilitates the presentation and comparative assessments of the reports and allows them to be subsequently integrated into a Regional Comparative Report.

The Structure includes the following parts:

1. Executive Summary

This section includes a concentrated abstract of the **main theme of the report**, its **main elements** as well as the **conclusions reached**.

2. Table of Contents

This table highlights **the titles and contents of the sections** forming the body of the report with a reference to the **corresponding page numbers**.

3. Preface

This section defines the main **purpose of the report** as well as the **context of its preparation** (Please adopt the attached template model No. 6). The preface also explains the different stages of drafting the report (*the research process, individual interviews and focus groups*) and the persons who have contributed to its preparation (*author, advisor, assistant*), in addition to the parties involved and consulted during the preparation of reports (*experts from governmental entities, private sector bodies and chambers of commerce and industry...*). The preface explains the problems encountered by the national team – if any- during the completion of the report. (*complicated access to information, lack of a main source for laws and official texts, weak response of official institutions, etc...*)

4. Outline of Content

1) Economic, social and political country background

This background includes a presentation of the **geo-political situation** in the country (*geographic location and relations with neighboring countries and the international community, the nature of the political system, participation of citizens in decision-making, freedoms, major problems facing the country, etc.*). It also addresses the **socio-demographic system** as well as the **country's economic data** (*population, age distribution, diversity of religious / sectarian and ethnic, distribution of income groups, the gross national product and gross national income per*

capita). This is in addition to an **overview of economic policy and the foundations of public finance** in the country (*type of economy –free or oriented, state intervention in the economy, traditional and modern sectors - IT, communication, banking - the possibility of privatization, tax policy and fees, interest and inflation rates, etc.*). This background also emphasizes **the legal system and the judicial environment in the country** (*the main feature of the legal system, the stability of the legislation, the nature and components of the judicial system, the judicial independence, degrees of the trial, the speed and effectiveness of judicial proceedings, etc.*).

2) Legal business environment (various commercial legislations; an introduction and assessment)

This part includes **a review of the main features of the legal and legislative situation** related to commerce, economy and business in the country (the main trade laws and related laws)¹ with reference to the most prominent legislative occurrences in the life of the country, especially those that have experienced significant and important amendments or have witnessed the promulgation of essential legislations, in addition to the country's state in terms of joining the bilateral and multilateral trade and business agreements. This part also contains an **analysis of the commercial laws of the country and the evaluation of its role in stimulating business and a promoting a climate which is favorable for investment.**

The process of analysis and assessment requires an examination of **the legislations' strengths and weaknesses** (*Are there legal provisions that facilitate procedures and decrease costs for establishing companies? Are there provisions that encourage the creation of non-family corporations and discusses to means of administration, accounting and protection of minorities? Is there a complicated proof system for commercial transactions? Are there laws that encourage monopoly and impose restrictions on competition? Is there sufficient protection for intellectual property as provided in the legislation? Are there alternative means for dispute resolutions such as arbitration and is the state allowed to be a party? Are labor laws abusive towards the employer? Etc...*). Afterwards, an assessment study on **the effect of legislative status (strengths and gaps) on enhancing the investment environment and creating a business-like climate,** shall take place through discussing **the legislative incentives and impediments to investment,** in addition to the **substantive and procedural guarantees that protect investment.** Based on the above, this part concludes with a **review of the legal texts or materials that need to be cancelled or amended** within the current commercial laws in addition to the **legal texts or materials that must be added to the existing commercial laws.**

3) The major reform activities and programs in the country

This part conducts a full **review and evaluation of the reform programs and activities** carried out in the country, with a view to strengthening commercial laws and business enabling environments, through the identification of the **implementing bodies and the contemplated objectives, and results achieved to date.** The main examples of these activities are **workshops and training courses** to enhance the capacity on commercial law, **committees established to**

¹ Contract laws, corporate laws, investment laws, banking laws, fiscal and taxation laws, competition and consumer protection laws, intellectual property laws, civil and commercial procedures, means of dispute resolutions (formal and alternative), real-estate laws, environment laws, administrative laws, insurance and stock exchange.

study the laws and propose amendments to it, and others.

4) Conclusion

The part includes **a summary** of what has been reviewed in the report with an explanation about **the challenges that hinder the process of legislative reform** in the field of commercial law and the **recommendations or the proposed road map** to achieve this reform and strengthen the investment environment. Throughout this part, it is crucial to provide an **introduction on the specific theme** which will be addressed by the in-depth study that follows this report (investment law and real estate sectors in the UAE, competition law in Tunis, intellectual property in Lebanon, and execution of contracts in Yemen)

5. Annexes

1. Glossary of Terms
2. List of references of the laws and economic regulations.
3. Statistics and empirical data scales.
4. List of partners and concerned government parties.
5. Background papers
6. Minutes of the meetings of the Focus Groups and individual interviews.

Third Section

Annexes

1. Research Report Template
2. Individual interviews record Template
3. Content and design of background paper Template
4. Bibliography Template
5. Focus Groups and individual interviews minutes of meetings Template
6. A brief profile regarding scope and objective of the report Template



Research Report (template n.1)

Name:	
Date of Report:	
Date Sent:	

Introduction: (purpose of research and intended result, the used methodology)

Part 1: an overview on the resources of the references and the means of collecting them

Electronic sources:

Main sources:

Part 2: a brief description of the content of the references and documents (main themes and points)

Part 3: an analysis of the achieved results and an identification of the preferred resources (did the documents present new knowledge and how can it be employed in the report)



Individual Interviews Minutes (template n.2)

Name:	
Interviewed Person:	
Date of Interview:	
Place of interview:	
Date Sent:	

Introduction: (who is the person interviewed and why?, what are the intended outcomes?)

Main points and question raised:

Conclusions:



Background paper on the economic situation and policy in the country (template n. 3)

1. The Economic and Financial Environment:

- General economic data: population and age distribution, income category, balance of payments, level of investment and consumption, comparisons with other surrounding countries, membership in international organizations.
- Economic growth and development: GNP and GNI per capita, inflation rate interest rate, credit availability.
- State policies and actions: budget and public expenditure, monetary situation, tax level (VAT, income tax), corporate tax, financial indicators (total public debt, latest annual debt, foreign exchange reserves, aid received with details on main donors, major international debtors, level and details of public corporations).
- Main economic sectors at a glance: primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, with details (if necessary) on the banking, construction trade and energy sectors.
- Government international relations, types of commercial contracts and the government role, privatization potential and horizons.

2- The General Investment climate:

- The business climate: business disclosure index, cost and time of business start-up procedures, intellectual protection, intensity of local competition, procedures to enforce contract (number), procedures to register property (number), rigidity of employment index, sounding of the banking system, procedures to getting credit, time to resolve insolvency (in years), income tax for local and foreign corporations, procedures and time for closing a business, quality of infrastructure, (roads, ports and telecom), investment guarantees and incentives, social security contributions, water, fuel and gasoline cost, cost of buying and renting premises for housing and for businesses, customs duties, laws for transferring capital, anti-trust laws, health care and price controls, dealing with licenses, existence or non existence of exclusive agencies, education level, income distribution.
- The business potential: income distribution and discretionary income productivity, unit labor costs and labor compensation costs compared to other regions, public sectors deemed for privatization, underdeveloped sectors of the economy, reforms and opportunities expected in the short and medium term

3. Legal and judicial situation- an economic approach:

- Speed and efficiency of commercial and civil procedures time and cost (particularly regarding execution of verdicts).
- Alternative dispute resolution, eligibility of state to resort to Arbitration, joining international arbitration conventions.
- Judicial independence and non-existence of corruption.
- Transparency and promptness of trials.

4. Policy recommendations and reform

- Key priorities for action (by sector).
- Suggested reform (social, economic)

5. List of references and comparative sources

6. List of national Project-related investment, financial and economic organizations and institutions.



Bibliography (template n.4)

Official texts

Laws

Name of the law, number, year of issue, published in (...)

Decrees

Decree name, number, year of issue, published in (...)

Resolutions and regulations

Name of the resolution/regulation, year of issue, published at (...)

Treaties

Regional

Name of the Treaty, date

International

Name of the Treaty, date

Monographs

Author's name, "the title of the book", the city, the country, the publisher, the year

Example:

Pierre El Khoury, "The Fair Use and The Fair Dealing" Montréal, Canada, Thémis, 2007

Reports

Title of the report, the author, the publisher, the year

Example

"Arab Human Development Report", UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2005

Studies

Title of the study, the author, the publisher, the year

Example:

"The role of public prosecution in the protection of human rights and freedoms", Khalil Abdallah, UNDP, 2004

Articles

Author's name, "*the title of the article*", the journal, the publisher, the city, the year, the issue, the page number

Example:

Dureid Bcherrawi, "Rules and principles for prosecution judges in the new Code of Criminal Procedure", Magazine of Justice, Beirut Bar Association, Beirut, 2002, Nos. 2 and 3, page 99.

Web sites

The name of the owner (a public institution, Ministry, the organization, a natural person, etc), the URL, a brief or an overview of site

Example:

The World Intellectual Property Organization
www.wipo.org

Overview: This site of the World Intellectual Property Organization (based in Geneva, Switzerland) contains valuable information related to the protection of intellectual property rights. The site includes a complete set of IP laws in 138 countries and the international treaties in this area. This site is of a great importance to researchers in the field of law of intellectual property in both areas, industrial and literary property.



Focus Groups Minutes (template n.5)

Name:	
Date of Meeting:	
Place of Meeting:	
Date Sent:	

Introduction: (what are the intended outcomes?)

Attendees: (Names and Biographical Sketch, and reasons for their selection)

Main points: (Question raised and topics of discussion)

Conclusions: (brief of the presented suggestions with a description of each suggestion)



Context and Objective of the report (Template n. 6)

This report falls under the project "MENA Commercial Law Supply Side Strengthening" which is implemented by the Arab Centre for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity (ACRLI) in cooperation with Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), in each of the 4 countries: United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Lebanon and Yemen.

The overall goal of the Project, which extends over a period of two years, is to strengthen demand-side commercial law reform in the MENA region with a view to promoting a legal environment that is business enabling and conducive to short-term local or sectoral economic growth in selected MENA countries.

More specifically, the Project aims to improve the capacity to understand complex commercial law and regulations within the business and legal communities in the MENA region and to increase private sector participation in commercial law policymaking.

The Project primarily targets lawyers and businesspersons and seeks to actively involve them together with policymakers and concerned government practitioners in a results-oriented policy dialogue and peer-learning process with a view to enhancing the business legal environment in their respective countries. Consequently, the Project will rely on a network of partners at the national level in ..., including the ministry of ... as a main partner, the bar association, and the chambers of commerce and industry, and other professional associations.

In addition to these national partners, the Project will be supported by an International Advisory Group that comprises regional and international advisors in addition to representatives of regional and international organizations and partners such as the League of Arab States, UNDP, OECD, ESCWA, the World Bank, the ICC, Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, and others. In this context, this National Assessment Report on the state of commercial and economic laws in ... was developed to provide an in-depth study that presents a clear and focused picture on the development of commercial and business laws in the project countries, including the examination of relevant laws in texts and practice, as well as the analysis of the legal and economic system, with a view towards assessing the contribution of these frameworks in achieving economic growth and creating a business-enabling environment.

The current report shall be integrated, at a later stage, with the reports developed by the rest of the project countries; into one comparative regional report which provides a forum for regional policy dialogue and peer-learning for stakeholders in the MENA region.