

# Morocco: The world's gateway to Africa

The kingdom is a rising destination for continental investment and trade

Morocco is the African hotspot for foreign direct investment (FDI), says the kingdom's Head of Government Saad Dine El Otmani.

Agriculture and services are vital to its economy but "A large amount of FDI is going toward industry as Morocco is placing more importance on this within its development model," he states, highlighting the automotive, aviation, technology, renewable energy and mining industries as being particularly attractive. There are many reasons for Morocco's success, including a stability fostered by King Mohammed VI, a prominent regional and global influence, says El Otmani: "Morocco is an African country at the door of Europe. We have free trade agreements with almost 50 countries."

Since 2016, the government has introduced around 60 reforms to optimize the business climate, he notes. In collaboration with unions and employers' organizations, it is also focusing on Morocco's social climate and education is another priority, El Otmani states: "We established the Superior Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research to put in place a strategic vision for education reform. We have started to apply these reforms, which include



**Saad Dine El Otmani**  
Head of Government



**Mohamed Hajoui**  
Secretary General of the Government

making preschool accessible to all and reducing class size."

Morocco's World Bank Doing Business ranking "has gone from 97th in 2012 to 53rd in 2020," says Secretary General of the Government Mohamed Hajoui; "Thanks to our legislative and regulatory reforms, the simplification and digitalization of procedures, and the establishment of new reception and logistical infrastructures, Morocco aspires to become one of the world's 50 best destinations for industrial, commercial, financial and service activities by 2021." As a result of the

government's reforms, "Our legislative and regulatory framework has been ranked first in Africa," states Hajoui. He adds that Morocco's top-quality infrastructure now includes "Tanger-Med port, the largest and most modern port of the Mediterranean and African regions; airports connecting with Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas and Asia; a modern road and railways network; and networks of special economic zones and specialized institutions offering investors guidelines and support."

U.S. investors are well placed to take advantage of the opportunities in business-friendly Morocco, Hajoui believes: "Since 1786, Morocco has had an uninterrupted friendship and alliance with the U.S. Furthermore, our 2006 free trade agreement has brought remarkable benefits for the economic

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Mohamed Hajoui, Secretary General of the Government

operators of both countries." Morocco and the U.S. are also strong partners in the fight against crime and collaboration in this area has deepened recently, particularly in relation to terrorism, says former Minister of Justice Mohamed Auajjar. Overall, he says: "A comprehensive reform of our judicial system has been undertaken in the past few years." Having established its Superior Council of the Judiciary two years ago, the country now has a demonstrably independent justice system that reflects the Moroccan Constitution enacted in 2011. "The constitution represented a qualitative landmark. It has an entire section on human rights and freedoms, affirms that democracy is our fundamental choice and strengthens judicial independence in a framework where powers are balanced in fairness and cooperate with each other," Auajjar explains.

Many of the legal reforms that have been implemented, which are aligned to international standards, "strengthen human and civic rights and improve governance," he states. In 2018, a major reform to the kingdom's commercial code was also introduced, adds Auajjar: "It is now in line with our open, market economy and desire to improve our attractiveness to investors and businesses. We have adopted new legislation on the difficulties that enterprises can face,

which is inspired by the world's best practices. This enabled us to jump from 134th to 71st place in the "resolving insolvency" criterion of the World Bank's Doing Business ranking." In addition, the code's system for property securities has been improved to facilitate greater access to funding for businesses.

Morocco's business-friendly environment has made it a financial hub for enterprises working in other African countries. Much of their investment passes through the renowned financial center Casablanca Finance City (CFC), says its CEO, Said Ibrahim: "CFC is a stepping stone to Africa. We are ranked first in Africa by the Global Financial Centers Index." About 200 of the world's leading firms are currently members of the CFC community, including BNP Paribas, American International Group, McKinsey, Lloyd's of London and Clifford Chance, states Ibrahim: "It's a very comprehensive ecosystem made up of financial institutions, professional services and regional headquarters of international companies. All of them have an African footprint that covers 48 countries in total. We also host investment funds, such as the African Development Bank's Africa50 fund, because the continent has huge needs in terms of financing and one of our goals is to channel that capital flow."

CFC members take advantage of Morocco's many strategic assets, which include a central bank and financial authorities that are regional benchmarks. But membership of the center brings extra benefits, Ibrahim reveals: "Our members have streamlined processes for all administrative paperwork, they can hire as many expatriates as they want and there is no foreign currency exchange control for members. We have also put in place a mediation and arbitration center led by well-known international arbitrators." In addition, members receive tax incentives, including a five-year corporate tax exemption, have access to a skilled local talent pool, and can tap into both CFC's and other members' in-depth knowledge about doing business in Africa.

With CFC continuing to grow, it is looking to recruit new members in specific financial areas—such as more investment funds, private banking for high-net-worth African individuals and fintech—that will profit from ever increasing opportunities, he says: "The African Continental Free Trade Area will start soon and, by 2050, the continent will be the second biggest in the worldwide economy. The potential is huge but the continent is fragmented—we have 54 countries with 54 different ways of doing business. It's important to be on the ground in Africa and Casablanca is the best place."

As the continent gets richer, more Africans are joining the many people from around the world who travel to Morocco for first-class cosmetic treatments from the state-of-the-art Guess Clinic in Casablanca, says its owner and leading plastic surgeon, Dr. Mohamed Guessous: "We offer personalized medical tourism, our techniques are at the global forefront, and we are passionate about beauty and well-being." The clinic has gained recognition for specialties that include cosmetic surgery and medicine, laser treatments, hair transplants, dentistry and gynecological cosmetic medicine. Guessous is now looking to expand his Guess Clinic concept, possibly with external partners, he states. Reflecting the Moroccan economy overall, success is breeding ever more success.

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**Mohamed Auajjar**  
Former Minister of Justice



**Nadia Kettani**  
Senior Partner and Co-Manager  
Kettani Law Firm



**Said Ibrahim**  
CEO, Casablanca Finance City

## A powerful partner in law

Kettani Law Firm (KLF), originally established by Professor Azzedine Kettani in 1971, is one of the strongest and largest independent law firms in Morocco with almost 100 staff members, including over 50 lawyers, covering litigation, consulting and arbitration cases in its Casablanca head office.

KLF is specialized in business activities and is a leader in the fields of banking and finance, project finance, capital markets, labor, intellectual property, anti-trust, renewable energy, telecommunications as well as aviation. KLF has advised government offices, major businesses, public and private companies and institutions from all over the world.

The consulting department, managed by senior partner Nadia Kettani who is known for her astuteness, corporate experience as well as her excellent commercial sense, is composed of a strong multidisciplinary team of highly experienced lawyers admitted in multiple bars and working at a sustained pace.

The litigation department, led by senior partner Rita Kettani and her keen strategic sense, is composed of senior attorneys who have a significant experience and knowledge in judicial and arbitral proceedings.

Senior partner Zineb Kettani is also one of the most brilliant minds in KLF and manages flawlessly the debt recovery department which is considered as one of the largest departments in the firm.

After nearly 50 years of experience, KLF measures its success by its involvement in the most important projects and financial operations in Morocco. Its outstanding successes have led the firm to regularly receive prestigious international awards and recognitions. As for what the future holds, KLF will continue to provide its clients with an impeccable service exceeding their expectations.



**Azzedine Kettani**  
Founder  
Kettani Law Firm

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# A well-orchestrated transition for Morocco leading it to success

Saadeddine Othmani, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, provides a thorough overview on the country's plans and strategies.



**What is your evaluation of Morocco's economic performance in 2018, and what are the government's objectives for 2019?**

Morocco is a middle-income country, which is a challenge but also an achievement for its stability and security. It is a monarchy, and His Majesty The King Mohammed VI plays a global role in this, as well as an important role for regional and international influence. The goal is to place Morocco in a good competitive position, among the most developed countries. We hope to be in the club of promising emerging countries very soon.

Regarding the economic and social plan, many reforms have been made over recent years, especially in 2018 regarding the business climate. Between 2016 and 2018 we did about 60 reforms in this domain. We aim to be among the top 50 countries for business in 2020. These reforms facilitate the life of the company, especially small and medium-sized businesses, for international investors. This is why Morocco is the main country in Africa that attracts foreign direct investments (FDI). Between the abovementioned years, FDI increased by 25 percent. A large part of foreign investment is in industry, because Morocco is placing more importance on industry within the Moroccan development model. About 17 percent of our GDP comes from the industrial sector, and we aim to increase that to 23 percent in 2021. We have a lot of European investors who are located in Morocco and we are also beginning to attract other investors, especially from Asia and the U.S. This is the result of the reforms that we started several years ago.

**“For the first time in 2017 and 2018, Morocco was able to improve its score on the Corruptions Perception Index by Transparency International, moving up 18 places in two years.”**

Saadeddine Othmani, Prime Minister of Morocco

Regarding the transportation sector, the automobile sector is growing significantly. Morocco is the main producer of automobiles in Africa for the past 3 to 4 years, and is the main exporter of automobiles in Africa. It has a special importance for the industrialization of our economy, to provide more balance between the different sectors. Agriculture, tourism and services are still important and to this we are adding industry. There is another point that is important for us - the fight against corruption and good governance. For the first time in 2017 and 2018, Morocco was able

to improve its score on the Corruptions Perception Index by Transparency International, moving up 18 places in two years. In 2016 we were 90th and now we are 73rd, because of the reforms that were implemented. There is an ongoing effort to align the national laws with international standards. We started by translating our laws into English, to allow international investors to directly access a respective database.

Focusing on our social plan, we have strategies and plans to fulfill the needs of disadvantaged segments of society. We know that today that there are social tensions throughout the region; not just in the countries in the north, but also the countries in the east, Northern Africa and the Middle East. There are material expectations for disadvantaged segments of society.

We have many projects. INDH - National Initiative for Human Development - is a royal initiative that has been in place for 14 years, focusing on highly disadvantaged groups, to allow them to have jobs that bring them income. We also have a strategy for basic universal medical coverage for the segment of the population who are not covered, especially for independent professionals. We have a lot of reforms and initiatives for social reform, because industrialization makes populations fragile as well. It creates wealth, but also creates differences between the various layers of society and between the regions. We had a social dialogue with the unions and employers' organizations, and we signed a tri-party accord between the government, management and unions which allows for a focus on social climate for at least the next three years.

**Who are the international investors in Morocco, and where are they by sector? Can you give examples of the most important or the most representative?**



In 2019, Morocco's population was estimated to be **35.7 million people**



In 2019, Morocco noted a **Gross Domestic Product of USD 332.358 billion**



By 2017, Morocco had a **Foreign Direct Investment inflow of USD 2.7 billion**



We come across most of them mainly in automotive and aviation, as well as I.T. and renewable energy. There is significant growth in the number of aviation investors. Our renewable energy strategy aims to put Morocco among the top renewable energy producing countries in the world. 38 percent of our energy comes from renewable energy. Our goal is to reach 42 percent in 2020, and 52 percent in 2030.

**What would be the current roles of Morocco in terms of what distinguishes it in the MENA region; how do you view Morocco in the next 10 or 20 years?**

Up until now American investments in Morocco have not been at the same level as the political relations between the two countries. We expect much more from investors. For instance, rare earth minerals, of which China has a monopoly, are quite an interesting topic for investments. We have a lot of reserves, and the American investing community is very interested. We understand that there have been difficulties in the past, but we seek ways to overcome them.

Morocco will be an emerging country for at least 10 years, and will be among the most developed in Africa and MENA, which it is already. Morocco plays a role of stability in the entire region, but we are aware that if the whole region lacks stability, there are always challenges. That is why Morocco has a special significance in the South-South cooperation, and in the cooperation between Morocco and other African countries. The King of Morocco places special importance on this subject. He has made many trips to many African countries to build relations and sign agreements to develop cooperation at different levels: political, economic, social, cultural and religious, given that security is among the challenges that we face. Unless we resolve the security problems in the region, there will always be risks. Morocco has a strategy to combat terrorism, organized crime, weapons and drug trafficking. We wish to cooperate with all the countries in the region to guarantee the region's stability. Morocco has many initiatives for this.

**Education reforms are at the core of this government's political agenda. These reforms are of particular interest for U.S. investors and businessmen. What is the main strategy of your government to boost the performance of the education sector?**

Educational reform is a strategic reform. This is why the Superior Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research was established,



and it is responsible for putting in place a strategic vision for education reform. This strategic vision for 2015-2030 was adopted by the Council in 2015 and outlines the education sector reforms.

We have started to apply these reforms, making preschool widely available because unfortunately, as of last year, 50 percent of children aged 4 are in preschool, which means that 50 percent are not – 700,000 in pre-school, and 700,000 not in pre-school. So we have an action plan for making preschool accessible to all small children, to allow them equality in education.

**“Unless we resolve the security problems in the region, there will always be risks. Morocco has a strategy to combat terrorism, organized crime, weapons and drug trafficking.”**

Saadeddine Othmani, Prime Minister of Morocco

Secondly, resolving the problem of overcrowding, which has been a challenge. We have started to reduce class size and need to continue our efforts for the next 2 to 3 years, but we already have made very important steps. To meet these needs, we increased the education budget by 25 percent between 2016 and 2019.

Thirdly, we are giving particular importance to the quality of education. Fourthly, we are placing more importance on professional development, because, in today's world, there needs to be training which allows graduates of our institutions to have the know-how to easily and immediately find a job.

**What would be your final message to our readers, investors and government of the U.S. who will read this report?**

Morocco has made significant efforts on structural reforms, which today allow investors to have a lot of opportunities in Morocco. Firstly, it is a country which is strategically positioned – an African country at the door of Europe, with good relations with the MENA region. Secondly, it is a country that is economically open. We have free trade agreements with almost 50 countries, including the US, Europe, Arab countries and Turkey. So investors have import and export opportunities. Judicial reforms have also been made. There is an important outlook regarding judicial reform since the last constitution with complete independence of the judiciary, as well as reforms that allow the judiciary to fulfill the needs of investors.

## “Morocco has a secure and attractive business environment”

**Minister Mohamed Hajoui, Secretary General of the Government, on the business environment and its reformed legal framework.**



### How do you evaluate the business environment in Morocco today?

Morocco has an attractive business environment founded on the country's system of values of political and cultural pluralism, economic liberalism, the rule of law and openness to the world in a spirit of dialogue, tolerance and mutually beneficial cooperation, with the ultimate aim of guaranteeing peace and prosperity for all. Morocco has made considerable economic development progress in the past few years, as attested by the figures compiled by the World Bank, the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Furthermore, in the space of a few years, Morocco's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business report has gone from 97th in 2012 to 53rd in 2020.

Thanks to legislative and regulatory reforms, the simplification and digitalization of procedures and the establishment of new reception and logistical infrastructures, Morocco aspires to become by 2021 one of the 50 best destinations in the world for industrial, commercial, financial and service activities within a secure legal framework. We stand a good change to achieving this goal given the growth in investment forecast by UNCTAD for 2019, following a 36% hike in 2018 and a 23% hike in 2017, according to the same source.

**“Morocco is the first FDI destination in North Africa, the second in the MENA region and the third in Africa. It is also the second largest investor in Africa.”**

Minister Mohamed Hajoui, Secretary General of the Government

Morocco is the first direct foreign investments (FDI) destination in North Africa, the second one in the MENA region, and the third in Africa. On the other hand, Morocco is the first African investor in West and Central Africa and the second one in the whole of Africa.

### What are the key factors in making Morocco attractive for economic operators?

Morocco has many assets: First of all, the Kingdom's great political, social and economic stability due to the World wide recognized wise and farsighted leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI; the country's exceptional geo-strategic location at the crossroads between Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean; the success of its sectoral development plans (notably

for the automotive, aerospace, renewable energy and agro-food industrial sectors...); a legal and regulatory framework in line with international norms and standards; the national program for regulatory convergence with the European Union legislation; simplified and increasingly digitalized administrative procedures; top-quality logistical and communication infrastructures with a series of modern maritime ports along its 3,600km-long coastline including the Tanger-Med port in the midst of the Strait of Gibraltar classified as the largest and most modern port of the Mediterranean and African regions, airports connecting directly Morocco with Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and North and South America as well as Asia; and a modern road and railways network, including new high speed - trains; a network of special economic zones (SEZs) that account for 60% of our manufactured good exports; a qualified workforce, including young and competent middle-level professionals; an open economy with preferential access to the main markets in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and North America through free trade agreements with some 50 countries as well as with a number of economic blocs such as the European Union, the European Free Trade Association and the African Continental Free Trade Area, these free trade agreements make Morocco a gateway to a market of over one billion consumers ; our adherence to international conventions on the promotion and protection of investments and protection against dual taxation; a network of specialized institutions offering national and foreign investors guidelines and support, such as the National Committee for Business Environment (Comité National de l'Environnement des Affaires, CNEA), the Investment and Trade Agency (Agence Marocaine de Développement des Investissements et des Exportations, AMDIE), the Regional Investment Centers (Centres Régionaux des Investissements, CRI), and the Unified Regional Investment Committees (Commissions Régionales Unifiées des Investissements, CRUI).

### What are the latest legislative and regulatory reforms implemented to facilitate business?

It is noteworthy that the significant increase in FDI during the last few years coincided with the reform and adoption of a number of strategically important legislative and regulatory texts. Broadly, they concern two areas:

The first is the reform of the Regional Investment Centers and the creation of Unified Regional Investment Committees, which serve as one-stop shops for economic operators.

Secondly, the government reformed the legislative framework for setting up companies digitally; it created an electronic commercial register; digitalized



the property registry; established the observatory for the respect of payment deadlines, which caters to companies servicing the public sector, and ushered a new legislative framework for resolving disputes linked to public procurements by local authorities, which are now under the jurisdiction of the National Commission for Public Procurements (Commission Nationale des Commandes Publiques).

In this respect, several legislative and regulatory texts have been published, which amend the laws on commercial companies regarding the protection of minority shareholders and governance, and other legislative and regulatory texts on the insurance, capital market and banking sectors.

Let me also point out that in 2018, we introduced a major reform of the Commercial code, notably provisions about firms in difficulty. Indeed, substantial reforms have been made to support indebted enterprises. Other far-reaching reforms were made on the Code of Obligations and Contracts and the Commercial Code in order to strengthen the property security system and facilitate access to funding for enterprises.

Over the same period, the National Commission for Public Procurements underwent deep reform with the support of the World Bank with the aim of incorporating the best international practices in this field. It is now fully operational and its remit is to ensure transparency and fairness in procurement and performance of public contracts.

Lastly, two other institutions are worth mentioning as they also contribute to good governance and a sound business environment: the Competition Council (Conseil de la Concurrence) and the National Authority for Probity and the Prevention and Fight Against Corruption (Instance Nationale de la Probité, de la Prévention et de la Lutte Contre la Corruption). Inspired by the OECD's principles, the latter aims to prevent and act against any breach of ethics in the management of public affairs, including passive or active corruption in any form.

All these measures, which I have only sketched here, are aimed to foster trust, legal security and predictability for national and international economic operators in Morocco.

### What are the main challenges for the future in improving the legal and regulatory business environment?

All the reforms we have implemented to date will be enriched with the new Investment Charter whose main objective will be to promote investment. It will establish a favorable conventional regime for enterprises incorporated under either Moroccan or foreign law by putting in place good governance



rules for processing investment projects and supporting investors in completing their project. Furthermore, a new law is set to pass to further simplify administrative procedures, which will apply to all administrations that deal with the public.

National and international economic operators can rest assured about the soundness of our legislative and regulatory framework, which has been ranked first in Africa and hailed world wide as a benchmark in terms of legal security. It also stands out for its transparency and ease of access.

**“The Kingdom of Morocco signed a Peace and Friendship Treaty with the United States in Marrakech in 1786, - the oldest treaty signed by the US which is still in effect.”**

Minister Mohamed Hajoui, Secretary General of the Government

### What significant messages would you like to convey to our North American audience?

For your North American readers, I would like to recall, that beyond the legendary hospitality and beauty of our land, that Morocco has a historical uninterrupted friendship and alliance with the United States of America as illustrated by the Peace and Friendship Treaty signed by our two countries in the year 1786, in Marrakech.

As far as I know, this is oldest Treaty still in effect signed by the US. Already at that time, this Treaty sought to promote trade between our two countries on the basis of the most favored nation clause. One of the Treaty's last clauses—still remarkably topical in the present World turmoil—says that Morocco will protect American commercial ships operating off Morocco's maritime spaces, including Moroccan Sahara.

On this basis, our two countries are bound by an exceptional historical strategic alliance. In this regard, the United States declared Morocco “A strategic ally outside NATO”. Furthermore, our two countries have signed in 2004 a free trade agreement, which came into force in 2006 and brought since then, increased remarkable benefits for economic operators of both countries.

Overall, besides our business-friendly legal environment, in conformity with international norms and guidelines, the old, stable, deep and multifaceted relationship between the Kingdom of Morocco and the United States, make Americans always welcome in Morocco, and bode well for increased mutually beneficial partnership and shared prosperity between our two countries.

## Morocco, the most highly ranked destination in Africa for investors

**Nadia Kettani, Senior Partner at Kettani Law Firm,** describes what makes Morocco the best gateway towards Africa



### What are your impressions about the country's current development?

Morocco has modernized its economy to become a highly attractive platform and a true hub for investors. With its unique set of free-trade agreements, competitive labor costs and attractive incentives, Morocco is one of the most attractive African countries for foreign investors.

Using wisely its advantageous geostrategic location (sitting only 14 kilometers from Europe and at the crossroads of the main trade roads linking America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East), Morocco has signed multiple free-trade agreements and non double taxation treaties. In addition to facilitating investments and protecting companies, Morocco has a modern and investor-friendly legal framework offering multiple advantages to foreign investors, whether through 100-percent foreign ownership in local companies in most sectors, tax advantages in free zones or through legal protection, notably in commercial trade, intellectual property, free repatriation of dividends, capital gains and investments.

Morocco has also launched numerous and prestigious projects placing the country at the forefront of development by encouraging the renewable energy sector and by elevating infrastructure such as Tanger-Med Port, the TGV high-speed train (TGV) and the upgrade of its airports in order to meet international quality standards and requirements.

### Regarding law matters, Kettani Law Firm attracts foreign direct investment with consulting as a main tool. How does Kettani Law Firm help its customers to make the best decisions?

At Kettani Law Firm, the staff is composed of bilingual and trilingual lawyers admitted to various international bars who constantly work at a sustained pace to meet the clients' needs and provide them with an impeccable service.

Clients come to Kettani Law Firm because of its qualified team and its impressive track record of deals in various fields including, but not limited to, banking and finance, mergers and acquisitions, energy, labor, aviation, anti-trust and hospitality. They are also attracted to the firm because of its local knowledge and the expertise it has developed within its litigation department.

Thanks to the experience gained through the thousand of litigation files it handles, Kettani Law Firm is able to have a very precise idea of how deals should be structured to maximize the chances of protection for its clients should the complex documentation used in transactions need to be presented to Moroccan or international judicial and arbitral bodies.

At Kettani Law Firm, our deep-rooted expertise and local knowledge in multiple fields enable us to offer our clients a transversal and efficient approach to each case's specific issues. As a result, we are able to provide our clients with innovative legal advice and solutions.

### What have been your biggest achievements and challenges?

The biggest achievement is to have contributed to several upscale projects in Morocco that have had a significant impact on the market, and to have earned not only national but also international recognition as an excellent business lawyer, both from my peers and my clients. The challenge is to always be mindful of the necessity to deliver the best service at the best price.

### What is your vision for the firm?

Kettani Law Firm will continue growing as a proud independent Moroccan firm and providing its clients with the best service, ensuring that it not only meets their requirements but also exceeds their expectations.

The firm will continue advising and protecting foreign investors in various areas, facilitating their access to local information and helping them implement their projects thanks to a highly experienced team.

### What is the importance of the Azzedine Kettani Foundation?

Since 2012, the main purpose of the Foundation Azzedine Kettani (FAK) has been the promotion of legal culture by every means. FAK has been organizing several events, conferences and seminars within universities in Morocco and abroad, providing scholarships to support the most deserving students in the pursuit of their legal studies and contributing to the development of research by creating libraries.

### In recent years, Morocco has turned out to be a very large goods trading partner. How does the firm benefit from this situation?

Morocco remains a place of sustainable progress and stability which attracts, every year, investors from all over the world. The firm is one of the strongest and largest independent law firms in Morocco with almost 50 years of experience and has advised on some of the most important deals. Continuously recommended throughout the world by clients and law firms, the investors come rightly to us for all legal matters.



More than **100 U.S. firms** are operating in Morocco after **2016's free-trade agreement**



In **2017**, the total value of **Moroccan exports** grew up to **\$1.2 billion**



**Kettani Law Firm** has received more than **25 awards** over the last decade



## World-class Moroccan legal services maximize clients' results

Through its wide-ranging multinational experience, the award-winning **Kettani Law Firm** gives its clients major advantages in Morocco

**Kettani Law Firm (KLF) is a top-tier law firm based in the city of Casablanca, Morocco, which has been successfully advising its clients in high-profile international legal matters since 1971. KLF brings the right combination of firm-wide skills and local-market presence to deliver the top-quality legal advice necessary to help its clients achieve their goals and objectives.**

The team as a whole consists of a distinguished group of almost 100 staff members, including over 50 lawyers who share diverse academic and professional experience both in Morocco and other jurisdictions. KLF's unparalleled multinational expertise, strong business sense, innovative strategy and remarkable track record maximize clients' results and enable it to offer a tailored service according to the needs of its blue-chip clients. KLF also provides high-end transactional and corporate services to its clients across a range of key industries, including energy, mining, finance, banking, aircraft financing, capital markets, telecommunications, mergers and acquisitions, labor and intellectual property.).

KLF was founded by Azzedine Kettani, head of the **Arbitration department** within the firm. Azzedine Kettani has been practicing as

a top-notch lawyer as well as a national and international arbitrator for 50 years. KLF is co-managed by senior partners Nadia and Rita Kettani.

Its **international legal consulting department** is led by Nadia Kettani, senior partner, who is renowned for her skills as a deal maker with a unique combination of experience and commercial sense in complex deals.

The **litigation and labor departments** are led by Rita Kettani, a truly experienced lawyer with a thorough focus on her clients' objectives and a good eye for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a case in order to develop the right strategy and persuasive arguments in major litigation proceedings across the country.

As one of her responsibilities within KLF, Zineb Kettani leads the **debt recovery department**. She is a highly regarded member of the Casablanca Bar Association who handles thousands of procedures and gives priority to clients' satisfaction.

Today, KLF regularly receives plaudits for its expertise in legal matters and it has been honored with significant and prestigious international awards over many years.

## A national initiative for the development of the medical sector

**Doctor Mohamed Guessous, esthetic surgeon and founder, Guess Clinic, explains why Morocco is considered by many a particularity in their sector**



### What are your impressions about the country's development right now?

Morocco has seen a great revolution in the economic plan in the last twenty years. I have been practicing in Morocco for 20 years and I have seen a big change in the level of our sector, from the point of view of the development of the country and the quality of patients that we receive. 20 years ago, we had a clientele that was 100 percent Moroccan with a lower demand. In the measure of patients that were coming from abroad, we received patients primarily from France, Belgium, and Switzerland. We adapted to this and created what is called personalized medical tourism. In Morocco, we have chosen not to engage in medical tourism en masse, but we have instead chosen personalized medical tourism, which is to say that the clinic receives patients without passing through intermediaries or travel agents. This is what differentiates us from countries that have chosen the low-cost route, like Tunisia, Thailand and Turkey.

**“We will surely open equivalent clinics in other cities because there is demand from patients, seeing that the concept is complete and that they feel both trust and pleasure under Guess Clinic’s roof.”**

Doctor Mohamed Guessous, Founder, Guess Esthetic Clinic

### How would you describe Morocco's position in the realm of esthetic surgery throughout the years?

Historically, in the 60s, there were already well-known surgeons in Morocco, surgeons who made their mark, while in Europe the industry was just beginning. There were French and Moroccan surgeons who received patients from abroad, and we as contemporary surgeons have inherited this history. The patients coming to Morocco come quite naturally, because we have this culture of cosmetic surgery in our country. In terms of geography we have a strategic position, in relation to Europe, Africa and the Middle East, while in terms of cost we are at an advantageous level. Last but not least, in terms of equipment we have private clinics available that are at the forefront of what is being done in the sector. In Guess Clinic, we have equipment for high tech operating rooms (all devices are FDA approved), offering very modern care for the people who come here to spend a holiday with us. They come from abroad, we keep them at the clinic for a few days or even a week, as part of their holiday. We have created a personal stay from the airport to the operation, from the hotel to a tour of the city to discover the country.

### Could you share with us some of your current challenges in your sector?

The challenge for me is creating new units. We are at the point of creating Guess Clinic 2, which will be a parallel clinic, at the forefront of current practice. We have chosen Casablanca again, because Casablanca is a big city in need of a high-level clinic.

We studied everything that is done in this country. Eventually, we will surely open equivalent clinics in other cities because there is demand from patients, seeing that the concept is complete and that they feel both trust and pleasure under Guess Clinic's roof.

### What would be the next step for you and Morocco in general in this industry?

We are in the process of developing our private medical clinic concept and have looked at the possibility of approaching partners or investment funding. It is important that potential investors considering investing in Morocco investigate the market. Then they will understand that the two sectors in Morocco that attract most of the world and money are medical care and education.

Morocco has a history in the domain of cosmetic surgery. We have developed this specialty and, while it is not too well-known, it suffices to look a bit into the history of cosmetic surgery. We have the culture and local demand: here in Morocco, physical appearance is very important for Moroccan men and women. This is our local patrimony, we use it in our medicine and we export it abroad. In this clinic, we don't only use imported products and techniques, but also local ones, so it is a perfect symbiosis between tradition and modernity. It is not only based in surgery but also in know-how, above all, and on very competent professionals. People devoted and passionate about the fields of well-being and cosmetic care.

-  **Guess Esthetic Clinic** provides 10 private luxury suites for relaxing and recovery to their clients
-  There are more than 270 flights per week from U.K. to Morocco for medical tourism
-  Morocco attracts more than 10 million tourists on a yearly basis

## A comprehensive financial community with an African focus

**Saïd Ibrahimi, Chief Executive Officer, Casablanca Finance City, guides us through a strategic plan based around Morocco's strengths**



### What are your impressions regarding the country's development?

Morocco's development has been steady in recent years with a positive growth rate, thanks to a liberal and open economy, and benefiting from free-trade agreements with the US and the EU notably. Important investments were directed towards infrastructure development, with excellent results, but a challenge remains in making growth more inclusive.

### When it comes to financial ambitions, how is the financial center a gateway to the rest of Africa?

Casablanca Finance City (CFC) has multiple members in the financial sector, such as banking, insurance, private equity funds, asset managers and more. With the support of CFC, these financial institutions carry out a lot of business in Africa. Our goal is to continue to channel international capital flow into Africa. The continent has a big need in terms of financing, whether it be in infrastructure or development, these needs are not always being met.

**“Our community of members grew, and in 2014 we joined the ranking of global financial centers. We continued making progress on the index and today we are ranked first in Africa.”**

Saïd Ibrahimi, Chief Executive Officer, Casablanca Finance City

### What is your strategy for bringing companies together and what value do the companies gain?

Being part of the CFC community allows companies to be based in Morocco, whilst benefiting from its strategic assets to conduct their business in Africa. Morocco has a strong political and macroeconomic stability, with one of the lowest inflation rates in Africa. Our infrastructure and connectivity are also at a high-development point; a vital factor for companies. The country has a good system of regulation in terms of the financial sector, which, according to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, has made Morocco's central bank an example in the African region. Moreover, CFC has created a set of dedicated value propositions for its members, which embodies efficiency and reliability. CFC helps its members dedicate 100% of their time and efforts on conducting business by offering a streamlined process for all administrative procedures and paperwork. In addition, CFC companies have an open-ended hiring quote for expatriates, helping more professional services grow in Casablanca. Companies also have access to free mobility of capital flow, meaning our community ben-

efits from unrestricted exchange control. Furthermore, CFC has put in place a mediation and arbitration center for resolution dispute and is led by well-known international arbitrators.

Our members are part of a community dedicated to Africa, enabling them to gain real knowledge on doing business in countries throughout the continent. To that end, CFC provides its members with information and fact sheets containing key insights that are not readily found. Moreover, the CFC community benefits from an up-and-coming, vibrant Casablanca, where expatriates can find a piece of home through a diversity of activities. From sport marathons to art exhibitions, Casablanca and, Morocco have adapted to cater to the expatriate world.

### What have been the CFC's biggest achievements and what are your goals?

Initially, we performed an analysis of the continent and found there were only two African financial centers ranked in the Global Financial Centers Index (GFCI): Johannesburg and Mauritius. Our goal was to build a successful financial center that would promote Casablanca. Therefore, CFC was created around a set of values, to attract international and national companies with an African vocation. In a nutshell, companies have access to CFC's value propositions by being granted the CFC status and thus, becoming a member. In 2014, as our community quickly expanded, and CFC successfully entered the GFCI ranking. In a short time, CFC gained top ranks and is now recognized as one of the most promising international financial centers.

In the future, CFC aims to continue improving this rank and to support its community in furthering their efficiency of doing business in Africa. Another one of our priorities, is to recruit new members in specific areas of the financial sector, with a focus on investment funds and private banking, to meet the needs of high-net-worth individuals in Casablanca. Finally, CFC is determined to have a strong focus on Fintechs, which is currently key for African countries.

-  The CFC community includes 200 companies across 48 African countries
-  CFC is part of 13 partnerships with international financial centers
-  CFC is considered the 1st green financial center in Africa and the Middle East

# OCP: Leading the world's agricultural revolution

How Morocco's largest company is key to our food future

Headquartered in Casablanca, OCP Group is a global leader in the phosphate rock and derivatives market, employing 21,000 people worldwide.

The company extracts, transforms and commercializes phosphate and phosphate products. With exclusive access to the world's largest phosphate rock reserve according to the U.S. Geological Survey, OCP is the world's top producer and exporter of phosphate rock and phosphoric acid, and is one of the largest fertilizer producers. It offers a wide range of customized fertilizer products to help sustainably feed the planet by enhancing soil and increasing agricultural yields. The company leads the industry in the promotion of the nutrient-stewardship philosophy of the "4Rs": right source, right rate, right time and right place.

OCP will be celebrating its centenary in 2020. Historically a department of the Moroccan state, the company was spun out in 2008. That same year it launched its large-scale integrated industrial development strategy, due to be completed in 2027, which is transforming the company into one of the world's most sustainable fertilizer producers with a presence throughout the phosphate value chain. Key to enabling this strategy has been its three industrial joint ventures with leading U.S. firms DuPont, Jacobs and IBM.

This transformation could not be happening at a more important time. With the world population predicted to near 10 billion by 2050, global agricultural production will need to increase by 77 percent just to keep up with food demand. To do this, crop yields need to be tripled and phosphate nutrient consumption doubled. And all of this will need to be done in a sustainable way that protects the environment. Customized fertilizer production, a deep understanding of plant nutrition and its correct application have never been more crucial.

With more than 160 clients across five continents, the group has significant international presence and market share, particularly in Africa, North America and Latin America. The company's competitive advantage lies in its ability to quickly adapt its product offering by flexing its production volumes in line with the seasonal volatilities of the market.

The group's plant nutrition subsidiary in Canada and the U.S., OCP North America, strives to advance the smart and efficient use of phosphorous on farms and to provide customers with plant-nutrition solutions that protect the environment.

In 2018, the OCP Group earned revenues of \$5.95 billion. 2019's first quarter results have seen revenues increase 20 percent to \$1.31 billion from \$1.13 billion in the same period in 2018. The first quarter earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization reached \$456 million, 73 percent ahead of the \$273 million achieved in that period of 2018, with an associated margin increase to 35 percent.



"For nearly a century, OCP's challenge has been to help feed a growing world population, while using resources responsibly and continually striving to reduce our environmental footprint. Our sustainable development vision, underpinned by our belief in balanced fertilization, is deeply rooted in our DNA. From feeding the soil to feeding the planet and creating new processes from mining to product use, and from working with communities to serving and promoting sustainable African farming, our mission is inherently people-centered."

**Mostafa Terrab**  
Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

This strong financial performance is, in large part, due to the completion of the first phase of the group's \$21.3 billion investment program that has allowed the group to optimize its production costs, triple its mining production capacity to 44 million metric tons of phosphate ore and double fertilizer production capacity to 12 million metric tons.

OCP's state-of-the-art production facilities have delivered a market-leading position in product customization and its investment in logistical flexibility—strengthening port infrastructure and the construction of the world's longest slurry pipeline—have enabled the company to access new, strategic growth markets.

In 2016, the company launched an African subsidiary to signal its strategic shift toward the continent and OCP's commitment to driving environmental and socio-economic development by harnessing innovation. OCP Africa was set up to work together with African governments and commercial partners to fulfill the group's broader commitment to contribute to the transformation and sustainable growth of African agriculture.

# Innovation is crucial to our food security

Chairman and CEO Mostafa Terrab explains OCP's approach

**Innovation is at the heart of our strategy to achieve a sustainable response to the global challenge of food security. Our policy is to continually invest in research and development (R&D) to realize value and deliver impact.**

Today, the group's R&D activities are concentrated at the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, our research hub and an incubator for ideas and innovation that is connected to a network of over 50 of the world's leading academic institutions. It is playing a key role in accelerating our progress.

Our approach has four pillars: first, we are focused on finding the right solutions for farmers and their soils. Because using the right fertilizer, at the right rate, in the right place, at the right time is the most effective method for increasing yields.

This is why we have created our smart fertilizer portfolio and have developed innovative solutions to meet farmer, agriculture and agri-food market needs. We export over 40 different fertilizer formulas to meet the specific needs of different soils and crops. And we are undertaking massive soil fertility mapping

exercises across the globe to ensure their correct application.

Second, is something we call "hacking phosphate": diversifying our product portfolio by researching and commercializing new applications of phosphate and its by-products.

Third, we concentrate a huge amount of resources on optimizing our processes to drive efficiencies. Innovating, through the digitization and integration of our supply chain and adopting new technologies, is







essential if we are to maintain our competitive advantage.

Finally, we are innovating sustainable production systems that meet our environmental and circular economy visions. Clean energy, for example, now accounts for 70 percent of OCP Group's needs and the group aims to meet 100 percent of its electricity needs by 2028 through wind, solar or cogeneration. We produce 25 percent of Morocco's clean electricity and are investing a further \$21.3 million in energy research.

**"We export over 40 different fertilizer formulas to meet the specific needs of different soils and crops."**

Mostafa Terrab, Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

## World leader in the phosphate industry

 <b>100 years</b> <b>of expertise</b> in helping to sustainably feed the planet	 <b>No. 1 global producer and exporter</b> of phosphate rock and phosphoric acid with 31% market share and a major fertilizer producer	 <b>\$5.95 billion</b> <b>in revenues</b> up 15% in 2018, with a strong performance in all segments
 <b>21,000 employees</b> committed to serving sustainable agriculture	 <b>51,000 farmers</b> benefiting from OCP's Agribooster program in Africa	 <b>More than 160 clients</b> across 5 continent
OCP S.A. Headquarters : 2 - 4, rue Al Abtal - Hay Erraha 20200 - Casablanca, Morocco <a href="http://www.ocpgroup.ma">www.ocpgroup.ma</a>		



# Transforming agriculture in Africa

Business transformation is at the heart of OCP Group's strategy and is the foundation on which its strong results for the first quarter of 2019 have been built

OCP Group's results reflect the completion of the first phase of OCP's industrial development plan. Over the last eight years, the company invested heavily in optimizing production costs, tripling mining production capacity to reach 44 metric tons of phosphate ore and doubling fertilizer production capacity to 12 metric tons.

OCP has also invested in its logistical flexibility through the construction of a slurry pipeline that connects its main mine in Khouribga to its facilities in Jorf Lasfar, where port infrastructure has been strengthened to help facilitate exports.

This has required state-of-the-art production capacities that allow OCP to optimize product customization, which in turn gives access to new strategic growth markets. "This focus on customization gives a crucial edge to our environmental commitments," says OCP Chairman and CEO Mostafa Terrab: "It ensures we can lead the way in the industry's '4Rs' objectives of fertilizer use in the right place, at the right time, right rate and from the right source. They are defining goals for the future of our industry."

**"This focus on customization gives a crucial edge to our environmental commitments. We can lead the way in the industry's '4Rs' objectives of fertilizer use in the right place, at the right time, right rate and from the right source."**

Mostafa Terrab, Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

As Morocco's leading company, employing 21,000 people, OCP is contributing extensively to regional development in several sectors, such as mining and fertilizer operations, as well as through its sustainability program.

At the heart of OCP, however, is a desire to keep learning and transforming. One of the key company philosophies focuses on education and change management, and every year it encourages its employees to spend four weeks volunteering their time to promote mentorship in its program Act4Community.

OCP is a major contributor to community development in the country and is the primary-employer target for some of Morocco's most promising talent. The transformation of the company has



seen the overall age of employees fall substantially: "In 10 years, we reduced the average age by 10 years," says Terrab, adding that the number of female employees in management positions continues to rise.




The company has mining and production sites throughout the country, and is committed to using as many local subcontractors and service providers as possible. It supports a complex ecosystem of small- and medium-sized companies, and ensures it is at the heart of the communities it serves. It has a substantial commitment to development

of farming on the continent at a time when Africa's global role is on the rise.

OCP's sustainability program aims to increase local community involvement. In its water program, for example, the company has committed to using no underground water. That has led to investments in water sewage treatment and desalinization plants in the communities where it operates.

OCP has also committed to using clean energy wherever possible. Today, 70 percent of its energy comes from non-conventional, clean sources and it is committed to achieving a target of 100 percent by 2028. Not only is this good for the environment, it also creates significant economic opportunities.

When Terrab took over as OCP CEO and chairman in 2006, it was clear the country had a precious resource and the potential to become a global leader and exporter of phosphate-based products. "On my very first day in the job, I was visiting one of our mines and started chatting with a miner. One of his comments has stuck with me ever since," notes Terrab: "He told me, 'If you understand that our true wealth lies in our people, then you will succeed.' It's

-  2019's Q1 revenues up 20% year-on-year to **\$1.31 billion**
-  2019's Q1 earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization up 73% to **\$456 million**
-  Investing **\$21.3 billion** in upstream and downstream activities



the tens of thousands of Moroccans working at OCP who drive it forward and are at the heart of our company, so that's perhaps the biggest impact we have made."

The potential of Moroccan agriculture and opportunities available within the sector mirror many other African countries. The opportunity lies in the fact that between 60 and 70 percent of the population is rural and agriculture is a traditional activity. The challenge is to grow the value add of agricultural production, to use as little water as possible and to support smallholders.

OCP is a long-standing partner of the sector and is strongly committed to supporting the emergence of innovative, high-impact models able to accelerate its transformation. The 'Al Mouthir' program offers a wide range of products and services to do that which, alongside the Ministry of Agriculture's 10-year-old Green Program, have and will continue to drive results and impact.

The Moroccan economy has the advantage of being diverse, and its shares of services, manufacturing and agriculture are fairly balanced. So it is a very attractive destination for foreign investors, such as those in the automotive industry and high-tech sectors like aeronautics.

Investors are attracted to Morocco's stable and open economic environment, its modern financial sector, the country's competitive workforce and the fact that Morocco is closely integrated into broader economic areas such as Africa, the U.S. and Europe.

### OCP's expanding African agricultural ecosystem

OCP Africa's strategy is to shift from being a pure fertilizer producer to an agricultural solution provider, with an end-to-end ecosystem approach that starts and ends with the smallholder farmer, and involves the key stakeholders throughout the value chain.

Its 'Agribooster' program focuses on four main areas: customized fertilizers, soil nutrient mapping and agronomic testing; production and logistics; holistic, farmer-centric support; and agricultural innovation.

"OCP is and will continue to be a significant driver of Morocco's economy and we are heavily committed to playing a key role in major technological developments such as clean energy and water conservation," says Terrab. "Transformation of our workforce to more accurately reflect the diversity of the population has been



significant and will always be a work in progress. OCP's role in developing African farming will be a major driver for the future."

These operating efficiencies, combined with increased sales volumes and favorable market conditions during the first quarter of 2019, have led to significant growth in revenues and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. OCP's performance is underpinned by the industry's strong long-term fundamentals, despite its cyclical volatilities.

**"OCP is and will continue to be a significant driver of Morocco's economy and we are heavily committed to playing a key role in major technological developments such as clean energy and water conservation."**

Mostafa Terrab, Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

Since February 2016, when OCP officially launched OCP Africa, the company has entered into strategic south-south partnerships with several African countries. This African strategy is a natural development for OCP: there is a clear role for fertilizers to play in fostering a continent-wide green revolution and, as an African company, OCP is well placed to assist.

OCP Africa is dedicated to the continent and it was set up to work together with African partners to fulfill its commitment to contribute to the growth and transformation of African agriculture.

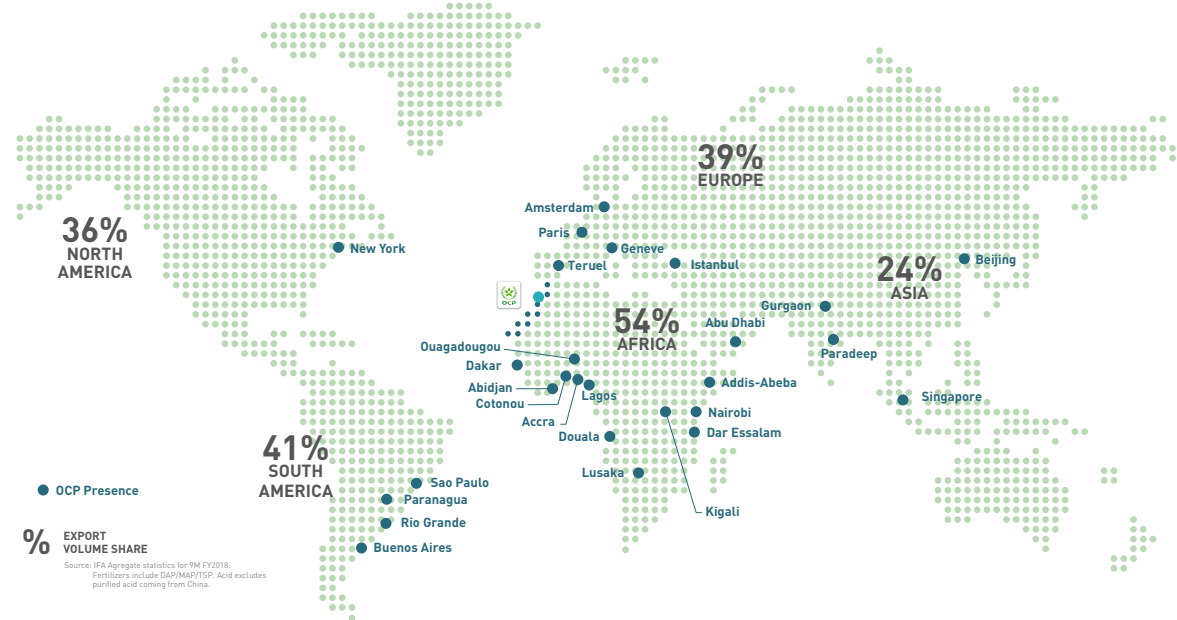
Since smallholder farmers make up 70 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa, OCP believes that empowering them is key to producing enough food to feed a growing global population. As the global population grows, Africa is the logical source of food for coming decades and will become an increasingly significant contributor to the world's breadbasket.

By working to ensure that smallholders have access to customized fertilizer products, OCP can help them increase yields and make a sustainable shift from subsistence farming to true agri-business—a transition that has ripple effects across the entire economy and helps build a more environmentally sustainable future.

OCP's future is intrinsically bound to that of the country and the continent. The future of all three looks promising.

## Our global presence

With operations in 5 continents, we are strong where our customers need us to be



## Our partnerships

Strong partners to help us fulfill our mission of sustainably feeding the soil to feed the world

<h3>Mines &amp; Processing</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phosboucraa</li> <li>• Prayon</li> <li>• Euro Maroc Phosphore (EMAPHOS)</li> <li>• Jorf Fertilizer Company I (JFC I)</li> <li>• Jorf Fertilizer Company II (JFC II)</li> <li>• Jorf Fertilizer Company III (JFC III)</li> <li>• Jorf Fertilizer Company IV (JFC IV)</li> <li>• Jorf Fertilizer Company V (JFC V)</li> <li>• Indo Maroc Phosphore (IMACID)</li> <li>• Pakistan Maroc Phosphore (PMP)</li> <li>• Zuari Maroc Phosphates Private Limited (ZMPPL)</li> <li>• Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL)</li> </ul>	<h3>International Trade and support</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCP International SAS</li> <li>• OCP Research LLC</li> <li>• OCP International Cooperative</li> <li>• Black Sea Fertilizer Trading Company (BSFT)</li> <li>• OCP do Brasil</li> <li>• OCP de Argentina</li> <li>• OCP Fertilizantes</li> <li>• Fertilizantes Heringer</li> <li>• OCP Africa</li> <li>• SAFTCO</li> <li>• OCP Support Services Private Limited</li> <li>• Fertinagro Biotech</li> <li>• Rwanda Fertilizer Company</li> </ul>	<h3>Engineering and Consulting</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jacobs Engineering S.A (JESA)</li> <li>• Dupont OCP Operations Consulting</li> <li>• Team Maroc</li> </ul>
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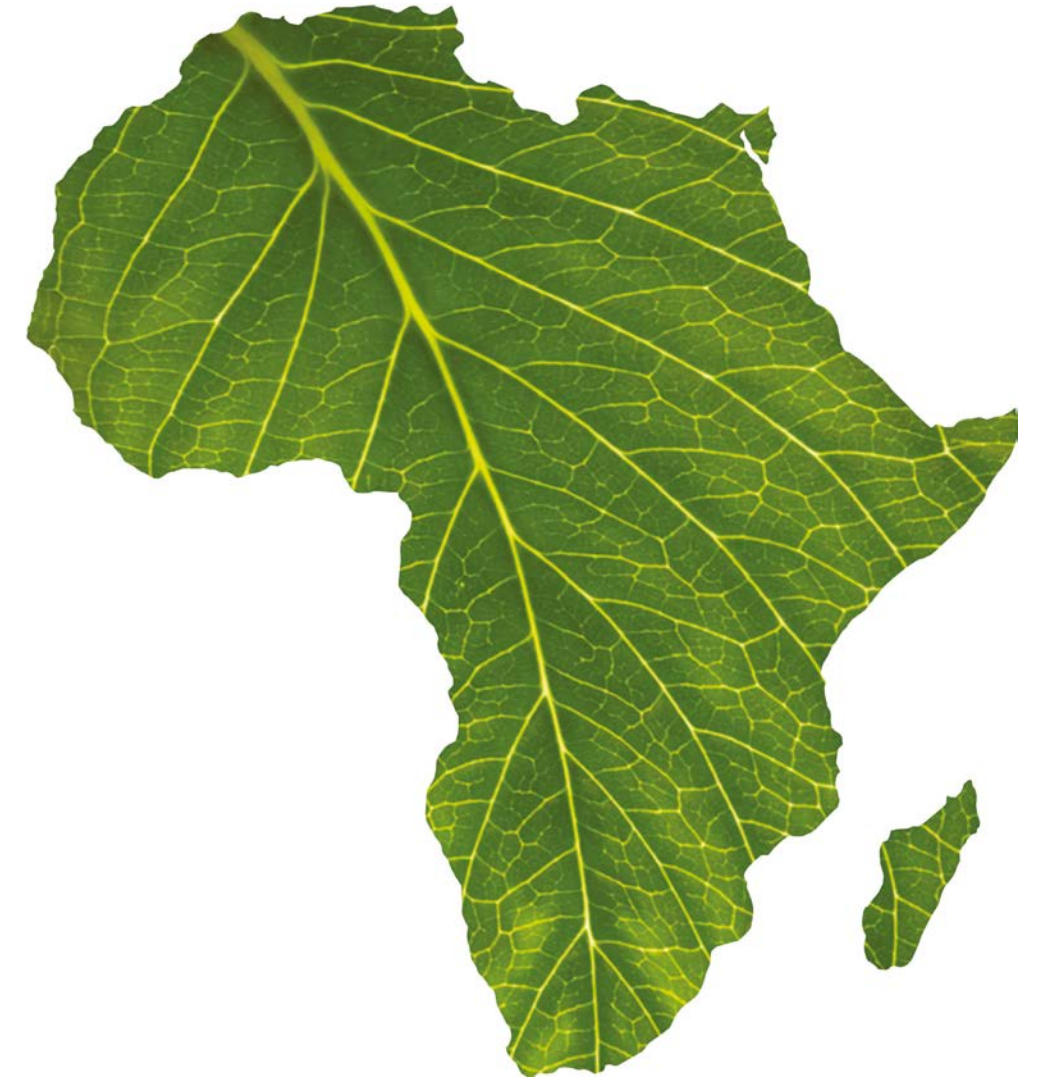
### Development of Business Ecosystems

- Société d'Aménagement et de Développement Vert (SADV)
- Société d'Aménagement et de Développement de Mazagan (SAEDM)
- OCP Innovation Fund For Agriculture
- Fondation OCP
- Fondation Phosboucraa
- Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique
- Lycée d'Excellence

### Services

- Teal Technology Services
- SOTREG
- OCP SERVICES
- OCP Solutions
- CERPHOS
- COMATAM

# Rooted in Africa Feeding the world



Can we sustainably feed a world of nearly 10 billion people? At OCP Africa, we believe the answer is "yes."

With subsidiaries in 12 countries and projects in over 15, we have made a major commitment to dramatically increase farmers' access to affordable, customized fertilizers and other products, services and networks they need to feed their fellow Africans and the world's growing population.

OCP Africa is proud to be working hand-in-hand with African farmers, using African resources, to contribute to unlocking Africa's vast potential in sustainable agriculture.





## The three pillars of our industrial strategy



Strengthening mining and processing capacities



Cost control



Industrial flexibility and commercial agility

OCP has doubled its share in the fertilizer market from 11% to 22% over the past 10 years

## Our circular economy approach



# Feeding the soil to feed the planet



With nearly a century of expertise, the OCP Group is a world Leader in the phosphate and derivatives market. Helping to feed a growing global population by providing essential nutrients for plant growth, the Group implements a vision of sustainable and prosperous agriculture by increasing crop yields while conserving soils.

Headquartered in Morocco, OCP works in close partnership with more than 160 customers over 5 continents.



www.ocpgroup.ma

## “Our reforms seek to strengthen human rights and governance”

**Mohamed Aujjar, former Minister of Justice**, comments on the far-reaching reforms of the judiciary carried out over the last few years



**How would you qualify Morocco’s record on human rights, in particular since the accession of Mohamed VI to the throne 20 years ago?**

Human rights have been considered for the past two decades as a fundamental principle and a strategic choice for our country, and there has been a marked rupture with some of the practices of previous eras. Indeed, we have extended civic, political, social, cultural and environmental rights.

Following the recommendations of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission, reforms have been implemented at every level. At the same time, we have upheld our commitment to United Nations-led mechanisms. A number of initiatives have been taken to expand freedoms, such as the new Family Code and the reformed Nationality Code, which have improved gender equality, the new Labor Code, and the National Initiative for Human Development.

**“The 2011 Constitutive was a qualitative landmark because it affirms that democracy is our fundamental choice and it strengthens the independence of the judiciary.”**

Mohamed Aujjar, former Minister of Justice

Through the Green Morocco Plan and a series of economic, social and cultural projects, we have also promoted initiatives for a peaceful, fair and sustainable conclusion of the conflict in Sahara, as part of the kingdom’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and the choice of advanced regionalization.

We have also strengthened our legal, regulatory and institutional framework, in particular through the establishment of numerous independent supervisory bodies in a wide array of domains (economy, social, culture...).

The institutional and legislative reforms were accompanied by sectoral policies that have strengthened human rights as part of strategic planning: the National plan on democracy and human rights (Plan national en matière de démocratie et des droits de l’homme); the Governmental Plan for Equality Aiming at Parity (Plan gouvernemental pour l’égalité dans la perspective de la parité); the Integrated Public Policy for the Protection of Children (Politique publique intégrée de

protection de l’enfance); the Public Policy for Disabled People (Politique publique intégrée pour les personnes en situation de handicap), and the new National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum.

The 2011 Constitution represented a qualitative landmark. First of all because it has an entire section on rights and freedoms, but also because it affirms that democracy is our fundamental choice and because it strengthens the independence of the judiciary in a framework where powers are balanced in fairness and cooperate with each other. In this regard, a comprehensive reform of the judiciary has been undertaken over the past few years.

It would be too long to detail all the reforms we have implemented so far, but their general purpose is to strengthen human and civic rights and to improve governance.

**What was the purpose of the reform of the justice system implemented over the past few years?**

The overarching aim was simply to ensure that Morocco, like many other countries, has an independent justice system based on the Constitution, alongside the legislative and executive powers. The Superior Council of the Judiciary, established two years ago, guarantees this independence, as is done in the world’s most democratic countries. Today, two years down the line, we can safely assert that the result is successful and meets our expectations.

**Can you tell us more about the reformed commercial code and also about the reforms aimed at empowering women at administrative level?**

Concerning the reform of the commercial code, it is in line with our open, market economy and our desire to improve our attractiveness to investors and businesses. We have thus adopted new legislation on the difficulties that enterprises can face, which is inspired by the best practices implemented worldwide. This reform has enabled us to jump from 134th to 71st place worldwide regarding the “resolving insolvency” criterion of the World Bank’s Doing Business ranking.

Furthermore, parliament has recently adopted a new law about the system of property securities, which gives businesses new avenues for financing since they can now offer their tangible and intangible assets as collateral securities. In accordance with this law, we will now establish a national property security register with the support of World



Bank experts. Now, concerning gender equality, we are very proud to have almost reached parity among the Ministry of Justice’s 14,000-odd civil servants. Furthermore, last year we opened for the first time in the history of our kingdom the profession of notary to women. Up until then, they were barred from entering this trade. We have recently organized the first entrance examination open to women, and we expect 300 will be soon able to operate as notary.

We believe all these reforms create a feeling of security, serenity and justice.

**Morocco and the United States are strong partners in the fight against terrorism, and the Ministry of Justice plays a leading role in this respect. How is this collaboration enacted in practical terms?**

As part of the government’s global approach on the complex phenomenon of international terrorism, our partnership with the United States is implemented through bilateral and international cooperation on crime in general and on terrorism in particular.

Over the past two years, this collaboration has been implemented, under the auspices of the working group on foreign fighters, particularly through two initiatives: the Rabat –Washington Good Practices on the Prevention, Detection, Intervention and Response to Home-grown Terrorism, which was adopted in 2018, and a document on advanced control and the sharing of information, which should be adopted by the end of 2019.

Furthermore, Morocco and the United States launched a common initiative in 2015 as part of the working group on capacity building in the Sahel region with the aim of creating a platform for promoting informal judiciary cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Sahel and Maghreb countries.

**What are the cooperation mechanisms for international judicial cooperation?**

Since 1983, the Kingdom of Morocco and the United States are signatories to a judicial cooperation agreement on criminal matters aimed at preserving and strengthening our long-standing relationship and establishing efficient judicial cooperation. Since then, this heightened judicial cooperation has been manifest through an increase in rogatory commissions and judicial notifications, as well as through



mutual requests for extradition.

Morocco’s approach is multifaceted. Apart from strengthening security, which is obviously key to avoid tragedies, we are pursuing an approach based on the development of underprivileged areas and a religious approach based on promoting a tolerant Islam and fostering dialogue to counter the obscurantist ideas that feed into terrorism. This approach has been largely successful: a number of Salafist Jihadist leaders have disengaged from their extremist views and now adhere to our religion’s pacifist values.

**“The Ministry of Justice is promoting gender equality and is proud to have almost reached parity in its 14,000 work force. We have also opened the profession of notary to women.”**

Mohamed Aujjar, former Minister of Justice

**Moroccan companies have actively invested in sub-Saharan Africa in sectors such as banking, insurance, mining and infrastructure and the kingdom is now an important player there. Do you think Morocco could also export its model for democratic transition?**

Indeed, King Mohammed VI has actively sought to develop our relations with sub-Saharan Africa ever since his accession to the throne, in 1999. In the past two decades, there have been more than 50 royal visits in over 30 African countries, and some 1,000 agreements have been signed.

The King’s commitment has also translated into numerous public and private investments in sub-Saharan countries. Apart from these domains of cooperation, the Ministry of Justice has signed agreements with a number of African countries on judicial cooperation on criminal and civil matters.

These are traditional areas of cooperation. But we have also developed the exchange of experiences and legislation as well as cooperation in the training of judges and justice personnel, which is particularly important. In this respect, several magistrates from other African countries are studying alongside Moroccan colleagues. This kind of cooperation amounts to exporting a model and an experience based on the principles of the rule of law, the impartiality of justice, and fair trial. These are the pillars of democracy.