



# **The Role of Think Tanks in Developing Countries : Challenges and Solutions**

## **The case study of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES)-Morocco**

**Cairo, 17th January 2009**

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# The context of IRES establishment

## **An international environment highly determinant for the country's future :**

- ✓ opportunities, calling for anticipation and deliberate actions
- ✓ uncertainties and threats urging for greater awareness and premonition strategies

## **A multi-transitional domestic environment :**

- ✓ need to sustain recent achievements and to set up long term objectives

## **Development of future thinking :**

- ✓ setting up of long term sectoral and territorial visions since 1998
- ✓ drawing between 2004 and 2006 the achievements of a half century of Morocco's human development
- ✓ development of economic intelligence, encouragement of public research and the emergence of private think tanks

## **The IRES as an appropriate answer :**

- to develop strategic analysis and foresight thoughts to support decision-making
- to enable Morocco to get hold of strategic intelligence tools so as to identify major signals and trends taking place at the domestic and international level

# IRES positioning and ambitions



## **The IRES is an institute :**

- whose task is to carry out operational studies and strategic analysis on which it is entrusted by The Sovereign
- that contributes to support strategic decision-making
- with an extensive field of intervention and large time horizon that goes beyond cyclical issues
- able to apprehend complexity and make better use of interdisciplinary approaches.
- holding an intellectual independence in terms of research findings and recommendations



## **The IRES is not :**

- an establishment under government guidance
- an academic research institute
- an institute of strategic planning
- a sectoral-based strategic analysis institute
- a center of analysis dedicated to the development of foresight concepts and methods
- a monopoly of strategic thoughts
- a public sector consulting entity whose activity is limited to the organization of large forums or public debates



# IRES missions



The IRES' activities are globally articulated around four missions :

## Two principal missions

## Two secondary missions

### 1 IRES. THINK THANK

- Examination of issues deemed strategic for the country (society, environmental changes, impacts of globalization,...)

### 2 IRES. WATCH

- Observation and strategic watch

### 3 IRES. FORUM

- Intellectual diplomacy
- Center of debate and thoughts
- Dissemination of strategic thoughts across different level

### 4 IRES. INCUBATOR

- A gateway to higher positions within the public sector





## Leading research networks at the national level

- **Externalisation of some part of IRES production, requiring thus a good expertise in projects management :**
- ✓ mastering of problematic issues and elaboration of concise terms of reference
- ✓ mentoring and constitution of multidisciplinary teams
- ✓ synthesis works and elaboration of strategic orientation papers
- **Quality control and mastering of research programs**

## Flexible and proactive structure

- **Project-based structure :**
- ✓ based upon clusters of competencies taking into account the necessity to accumulate knowledge and consolidate achievements (monitoring system)
- **Modern :**
- ✓ thinking public and acting private
- ✓ based on diversified teams of academicians & practitioners to deliver practical solutions

## Development of foresight thoughts

- « A philosophy of change, a tool to investigate possible ways and to build a targeted future\*»
- An attitude favouring collective intelligence and cross-sectional approach
- Enabling to capture complexity and taking into account interdependencies

Strategic choices that aim at optimizing resources and maximizing IRES added-value

\*Source : *Mémento de prospective 2008*, Fabienne Goux Baudiment, proGective





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## IRES positioning and its main consequences

### Advantages of IRES positioning :

- handling of long term prospects; with an extensive field of studies dealing with cross-sectional issues
- Independence with regard to the political parties and the public administration
- better access to sources of information and easier mobilization of competencies
- much less funding constraints

### Conversely, IRES has to face some challenges :

- meeting requirements of high quality standards
- high expectations of public authorities with view to the complexity of covered issues
- dual mission, challenge to manage two parallel systems of communication; one opened to the public at large, while the second is confidential



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## Research programs and the issue of research profiles

### **Research programs :**

- carrying out successfully the strategic watch system in the short term and making operational the foresight information system
- achieving best current research programs particularly those related to societal issues

### **Resources :**

IRES missions require a diversified competencies and judicious merging of academic researchers and practitioners :

- availability of high qualified profiles in various domains of social sciences
- difficult to get hold of interdisciplinary competencies and future studies experts
- barrier of language skills, as many qualified researchers have in general either arabic and/or french academic backgrounds, with only few anglophone researchers

### **Information & data :**

- unavailability of quantitative and qualitative data on some specific topics

### **Culture :**

- setting up of a specific culture based upon the quaternary management





## Structure specifics and managerial issues

### Advantages :

- project based structure, through permanent and ad-hoc clusters of competencies

### Challenges :

- setting up of a specific culture based upon the promotion of foresight thoughts and its diffusion both internally and externally
- staff motivation to produce high quality and innovative work whereas IRES's remuneration grid is much less attractive in comparison to reward system prevailing in the national private sector
- setting up of an internal performance evaluation system

# Fostering partnerships: a valuable solution



## IRES would like to develop partnerships with think tanks :

- 1 whose missions are dedicated to support top level decision-making
- 2 whose current programs and domains of interest are similar to IRES
- 3 with a large experience in order to enhance IRES capacity building through accumulation of knowledge and know-how transfer
- 4 having particular interest in areas related to Euro-Mediterranean issues, Arab world and emerging countries

### **IRES seeks worldwide partnerships**

- ✓ because key issues have regional and global dimension (climate changes)
- ✓ or because these issues are viewed as priorities for other countries (social link)



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

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