

### 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







## 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**

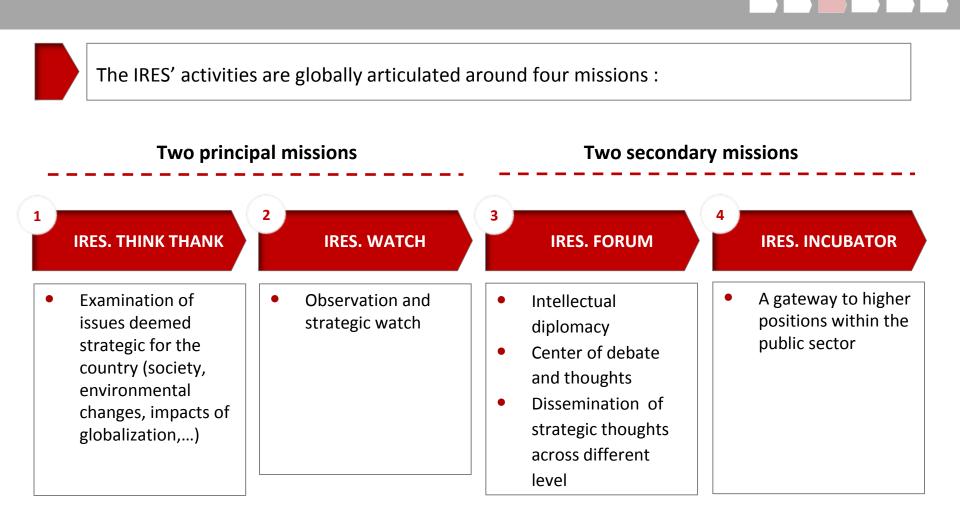
### • The IRES is an institute :

- 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





## **IRES** choices

Leading research networks at the national level	Flexible and proactive structure	Development of foresight thoughts
<ul> <li>Externalisation of some part of IRES production, requiring thus a good expertise in projects management :</li> <li>mastering of problematic issues and elaboration of concise terms of reference</li> <li>mentoring and constitution of multidisciplinary teams</li> <li>synthesis works and elaboration of strategic orientation papers</li> <li>Quality control and mastering of research programs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Project-based structure :</li> <li>based upon clusters of competencies taking into account the necessity to accumulate knowledge and consolidate achievements (monitoring system)</li> <li>Modern :</li> <li>thinking public and acting private</li> <li>based on diversified teams of academicians &amp; practitioners to deliver practical solutions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>« A philosophy of change, a tool to investigate possible ways and to build a targeted future*»</li> <li>An attitude favouring collective intelligence and cross-sectional approach</li> <li>Enabling to capture complexity and taking into account interdependencies</li> </ul>

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

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



## **IRES** assets and challenges





### **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

## **IRES** assets and challenges



### 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

### <u>Culture :</u>

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

### **IRES** assets and challenges





### Structure specifics and managerial issues

#### Advantages :

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

#### **Challenges :**

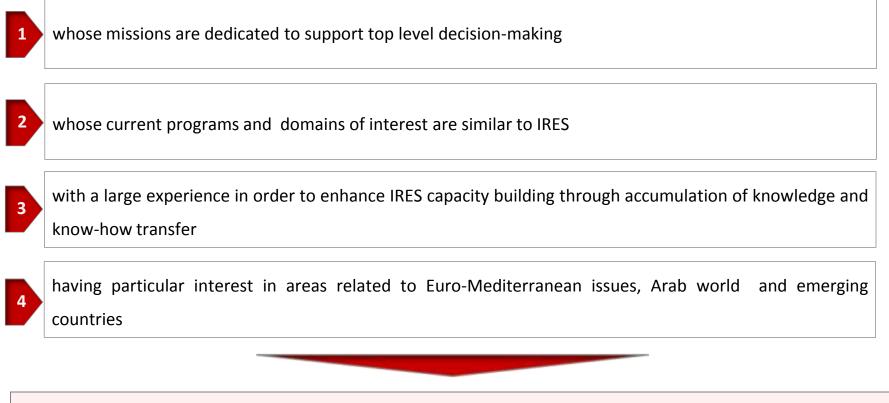
- setting up of a specific culture based upon the promotion of foresight thoughts and its diffusion both internally and externally
- staff motivation to produce high quality and innovative work whereas IRES's remuneration grid is much less attractive in comparison to reward system prevailing in the national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



## Fostering partnerships: a valuable solution

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



#### **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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