

# Public-private partnership in Morocco: Public service management tool, the case of the Rokhas platform and its impact on the environment

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**Abstract.** Nowadays, several countries are on a continuous quest to improve public service, and among these countries is Morocco. The latter has adopted a range of strategies to develop the public administration in general and the public service in particular, in addition, it has opted for new contractual procedures including public-private partnership contracts for the purpose of good management of the public service. The objective of our paper is to demonstrate the contribution of public-private partnership contracts on the management of public service through a Rokhas digital platform which is the result of a partnership contract between the company Ribatis (founder of the Rokhas application) and the Ministry of the Interior while taking into consideration the environmental dimension. This study is carried out through participant observation within the Ribatis company and semi-directive interviews with our target population, namely public administrations and individuals. According to the perception of users, this application has various advantages in terms of public service management and environmental protection, and like every tool, it also has a set of malfunctions to improve.

**Index Terms**— Environment, management, public-private partnership, public service, public sector, private sector, platform.

## 1. Introduction

The study of the subject of public-private partnerships is of extreme importance, as it has aroused the interest of several researchers and practitioners in various fields (law, economics, management, etc.).

In the wake of the continuous improvement of public services which is the major concern of States. The latter have used a multitude of tools and procedures for the management of the public service, including public-private partnership contracts. And taking into consideration the inclusion of our country Morocco in the Sustainable Development Goals, our work will deal with public-private public partnerships while appealing to the environmental dimension.

Indeed, the implementation of the laws governing public-private partnership contracts, including Law 86-12 on public-private partnership contracts [1], and Law 46-18 amending and supplementing Law 86-12 on public-private partnership contracts [2], have enabled them to acquire a legal pillar.

Indeed, the literature review determines the existence of several studies that have been conducted as part of the field of our research.

For Savas (2000) [3], the State is moving towards working with the private sector and non-profit organisations in order to be able to provide public services. According to Tarik REZZOUQ (2018)[4], the State is the guarantor of the public services offered to citizens, but faced with the shortage of human, material and technical resources, the latter is faced with the obligation to get closer to the private sector to cope with this shortage. And in the context of public-private partnerships, the State delegates its role to implement vis-à-vis the private sector while maintaining its degree of control and responsibility over the quality of public service. For Hodge and Greve (2013)[5], Wang et al (2018)[6] public-private partnerships represent one of the most manifested configurations between the public and private sectors.

The use of public-private partnerships by public actors is part of an ongoing quest for good management of public services while minimizing costs. While the interest dedicated to these public-private partnerships increase overnight. According to World Bank statistics, there were the implementation of about 2500 infrastructure projects in public-private partnership between the years 1990 and 2001 in developing countries (Zineb Sitri, 2015)[7].

For Darine Bakkour and Rafif Reslane (2022)[8], the Lebanese country suffers from difficulties in terms of infrastructure for several reasons, including the lack of a strategy at the national level for the improvement of infrastructure while the advent of a significant number of Syrian refugees (about one million) in Lebanon, and faced with the problem of the State to provide public services such as public transport and electricity and Participate in the progression of infrastructures, public-private partnerships are seen as a management mode with more benefits than traditional management methods.

In order for the State to provide infrastructure, it needs to implement significant financial resources and to invest for many years something that it cannot do alone. In this vein, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires synergy between the various public and private actors, hence the importance of public-private partnerships (Zineb Belghiti, Khadija Angade 2021)[9].

For Mohamed Benlahcen[10], the development of environmental services such as public transport and social housing reflects a basic pillar of sustainable development. In this vein, public-private partnership contracts allow the implementation of environmental services in a more fluid way with a reduced cost on the State budget.

Taking into consideration Morocco's inclusion in a long path of reforms to improve public administration and offer a good quality public service that will satisfy citizens, while respecting the objectives of sustainable development, our country has moved towards new processes of management of public services, including public-private partnership contracts.

In this wake, the problem of our article revolves around the following question:

To what extent do public-private partnerships impact the management of public service in Morocco through the environmental dimension?

In recent decades, several studies have been carried out in the framework of public-private partnership contracts at international and national levels, but few have integrated the environmental dimension into the existing relationship between public-private partnerships and public service management. In this context, our research will aim to fill this void.

During our research, we have the main concern to demonstrate the existing relationship between public-private partnerships and public service management, via a case study of a digital platform that was born following a contract between the public sector (Ministry of the Interior) and the private sector (the Ribatis company). This relationship will be highlighted taking into consideration its impact on the environment.

To carry out our research, we implemented a literature review on our subject, then we guided semi-structured interviews with representatives of society (the private sector), and

representatives of public authorities (the public sector) while users of this application. Through interviews with representatives of the private sector, we will be led to demonstrate the relationship of this digital platform which is the result of a public-private partnership with the management of the public service and its impact on the environment, while interviews with representatives of public authorities will allow us to get an idea of their perceptions about the Rokhas application and their degree of satisfaction.

The importance of our research is materialized in demonstrating the contribution of public-private partnership contracts on the management of the public service through a case study of a digital platform while taking into account the environmental dimension. It will also encourage decision-makers to think about integrating environmental issues into the drafting of contracts.

## **2. Article maps:**

Our article begins with a summary that gives a general overview of the study, followed by an introduction encompassing a set of writings relating to our research topic, then we highlighted the methodology used, then there was a presentation of the results that allowed us to move to the discussion phase. The article concludes with a conclusion.

## **3. Methodology:**

Convinced by the importance of new technologies and their repercussions on the management of public service, Morocco has integrated the process of digitalization of public administrations, and in this wake we have chosen to study the case of the Rokhas digital platform dedicated to the issuance of urban and economic authorizations at the national level.

Our research is based on a qualitative approach, carried out through semi-structured interviews within the city of Casablanca and Marrakech, during the period from July 2022 to March 2023. These interviews were conducted over two periods, for the first period, interviews were held within the city of Casablanca with representatives of the company Ribatis , including the general manager and officials of the company, with regard to the second period it focused on interviews within the city of Marrakech with representatives of the public authorities namely the Wilaya and public administrations having used the Rokhas application including the municipality.

For the first phase of the study, it focused mainly on the implementation of a theoretical framework relating to the subject of public-private partnership contracts in order to have an in-depth idea of the state of the art in relation to our subject. The second phase is dedicated to an empirical study of the field via semi-directive interviews, this technique allowed us to zoom in on the characteristics of our place of study while taking into consideration the research problem. All the data was collected and stored in an HP PC, then there was the full transcription of the interviews, then a textual analysis of them linking them with our main problem.

## **4. Data analysis:**

During our empirical study, we were able to guide semi-structured interviews with our target population, who had different genders and duration of work experience.

1-The Gender:

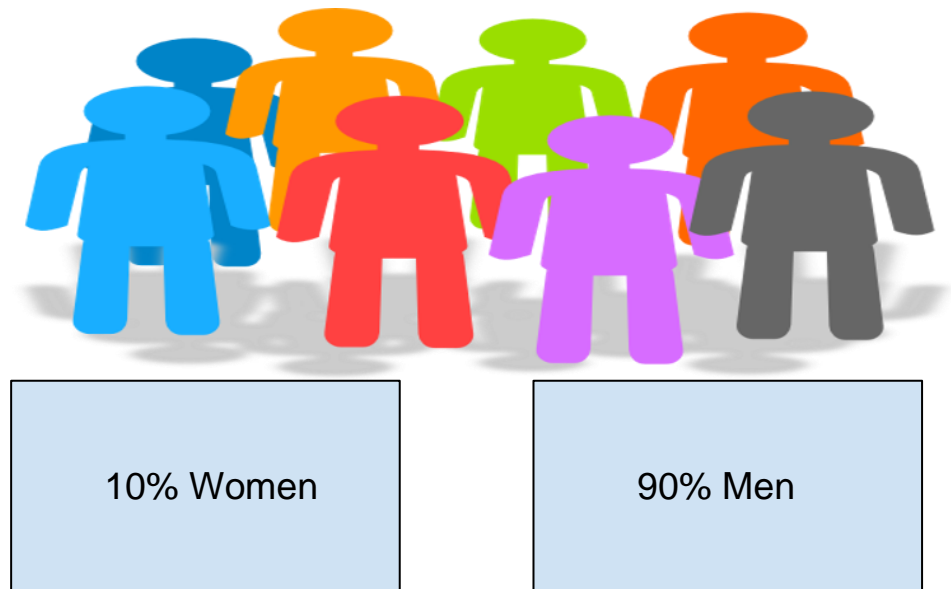


Figure 1: Respondents by Gender

**Source:** Authors

Our survey reached 90% of men and 10% of women, which determines that our target population is predominantly men .

2-the duration of the professional experience:

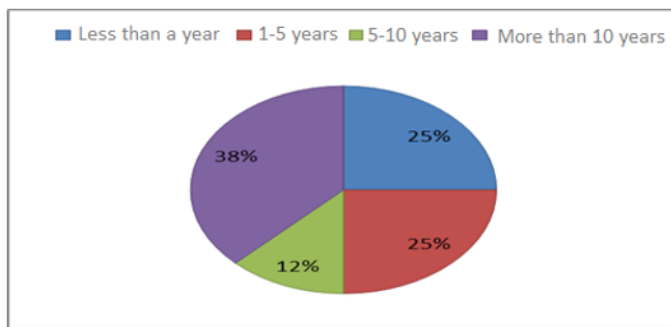


Figure 2: Respondents by length of work experience

**Source:** Authors

Regarding the duration of professional experience relative to our target population, it is divided into 4 categories starting with people who have worked for a period of more than 10 years which represents a percentage of 38%, followed by people who have worked for a period of 1 to 5 years which represents 25%, who are on an equal footing with those who have worked less than one year, and at the end comes the turn of people with professional experience between 5 and 10 years.

### 3-The impact of the Rokhas application on the management of the public service:

Rokhas is a digital platform whose purpose is the issuance of economic and urban planning authorizations, it was generalized in the year 2018 throughout the Moroccan territory. According to statistics released by the company, the application was able to reach about 40,000 users, and more than 1300 local authorities. By being a bridge of trust between the citizen and the civil servant, society determines its creed: "happy citizen, happy civil servant"[11].

According to the questionnaire we distributed to our target population, we were able to obtain the following results:

transparency	85%
the processing time of the file	45%
The security of online payment	73%

Figure 3: The target population's perception of the Rokhas app

**Source:** Authors

The table below, shows us that a little about 85% of the target population is largely satisfied with the criterion of transparency of the application, then comes the security of online payment which has a rate of 73%, and finally we have the processing time of the file which has a satisfaction rate of 45%.

4-The Rokhas application and the environmental dimension:

As part of the environmental dimension, the Rokhas application is a digital platform, which makes it possible to dematerialize the procedure for issuing economic and urban planning permits.

## **5. Results:**

After conducting semi-structured interviews with the various constituents of our target population, we were able to see that it was mostly made up of men and this can be explained by the nature of the subject. And as for the duration of the professional experience of our respondents we can clearly see that the most dominant category are people who have worked for more than 10 years, and this comes back to the entertainment

of the people surveyed who come from different structures (private company, commune, wilaya) who have been able to accumulate significant professional experience.

According to the perception of the target population about the Rokhas application, it turned out that the criterion of transparency takes the first place insofar as the customer has the possibility to consult his file online and see his situation in real time, then we find the criterion of payment security that demonstrates user satisfaction, explained by the system of the application which allowed users to have confidence during the payment and by the various training courses implemented by the company vis-à-vis users, and finally comes the criterion of the delay in processing the file which is more or less characterized by a slowness of the procedure and technical problems that affect the application from time to time (bug for example), and in this wake we propose to reduce the processing time of the files and to look for a larger Data Center that can support the large flow of data of the application.

As for the relationship Application Rokhas-environment, this platform offers an online service to the user that allows him to submit his file online without moving between the various administrations within the framework of the paperless principle and this is obviously beneficial for the environment.

## **6. Conclusion:**

As part of our study, we began the question of the impact of public-private partnership contracts on the management of public service in Morocco through the environmental dimension, and we took as a case study the Rokhas application which is the result of a public-private partnership between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ribatis company.

This study allowed us to have an idea about the perception of users of this application and their degree of satisfaction, which determined that this application may have had an impact

on the management of public service and on the protection of the environment. Our future work will be devoted even more to the dimension of energy and the environment.

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