



Epilogue



The Arab Knowledge Index (AKI) is envisaged as an important step in assisting researchers and decision makers to monitor and assess factors that contribute to the generation and use of knowledge. Considering the importance of knowledge and its role in achieving sustainable human development, this will enable informed decision-making based on the systematic analysis of data, facts and information. Building on the three previously published Arab Knowledge Reports, the AKI adopts a scientific methodology based on international standards, taking into account the specificities of the Arab region and its development dilemmas. It employs six composite sub-indices: Pre-University Education; Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET); Higher Education; The Economy; ICT; and R&D and Innovation, which all interact with each other.

The selection of related indicators that make up the composite index is based on a scientific process cross-checked via extensive consultation with leading experts in the region.

While constructing the index, special attention was paid to the intended end result - to develop a tool that is valuable in guiding development-related decision-making, allowing policy-makers and researchers to make choices that improve the wellbeing of Arab citizens. Accordingly, the selection process adhered to the understanding that the index should account for multi-dimensional aspects of knowledge as they relate to the needs of human beings - the central focus of sustainable development.

For the purposes of testing the index and its components, a great part of the data was selected from what is available in specialised regional and international databases, allowing the flexibility to complement them at later stages by collecting the primary data required by some indicators, especially those relating to aspects that are specific to the Arab region and not covered by current databases.

The data from each sectoral index was subjected to in-depth statistical processing designed to validate the consistency of its fundamental variables and pillars, as well as

their interpretive value, alongside calculating the total value of these sectoral indices for countries covered by available data. The purpose was to discover the extent of the accuracy of this data in view of trends that reveal similar or directly related indicators. The results revealed significant consistency between the variables, with 80 per cent of the composite sub, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7. Lack of consistency in some indicators is attributed to a serious shortage of data, and in others to the nature of the adopted indicators. In general, the interpretive values of each index exceeded 50 per cent.

The total interpretive values of the sectoral indices, standardised on a scale from 1 to 100, revealed the progress of the Gulf States in general, which is in line with numerous other indices. These values generally varied from one sector to another and from one country to another, which attests to the comparative capacity of these indicators. These indicators will constitute one of the main components of the forthcoming online "Knowledge 4 All" Portal and will support the production of quantitative and qualitative studies along with comparisons with data provided by other indices that will help in building objective understanding with multiple entry points. The Portal itself will also provide the necessary components for updating the Index and will contribute to its diffusion on a broad scale. All of this will enhance the region's capacity to monitor the particularities of its situation and implement adequate strategies to overcome the challenges it faces.

Notwithstanding their importance, these indicators can never claim to be perfect or even complete, and may be considered a fundamental nucleus that requires greater enrichment, development and testing until they fulfil all the conditions for success and sustainability. For this purpose, efforts will be concentrated in the coming stages on three pursuits, namely:

- Working diligently to address the issue of the lack of data by setting a plan for both the short and medium terms to collect as much data as possible. This additional data can be employed to test the six thematic indices, with all their various sub-pillars,

in order to determine the added value of the Index and the extent of its capacity to compete with other indices;

- Increasing the focus on variables that are particular to the region in order to develop a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges it faces, in a way that does not isolate it from the global context. In fact, the AKI's goals should include achievements that are of no less importance than those applicable elsewhere in the world, and its components should allow the Arab states to assess their situation not only at the local and regional levels but also globally;
- Taking the initiative in establishing a network of partnerships with regional and international organisations and creating connections with trustworthy international databases to both benefit from their experience and facilitate cooperation with them in the process of data collection, updating and processing. This requires the launch of an extensive campaign within competent circles to acknowledge and discuss indicators with a view to achieving improvements in their form and substance.

In general, it is hoped that work will continue on the development of these indices in order to attain a structural index of knowledge for development in the Arab region, with

the ability to fulfil a pivotal role in the strategies of the Arab renaissance. The aim is to become a reference for policy-makers, experts and researchers assisting in drawing up development plans and policies, and to contribute to the creation of a competitive environment motivating policy-makers and competent authorities to implement further programmes and initiatives for generating and applying knowledge. Ultimately, the desired objective of this process is the transformation of societies that consume knowledge into societies that produce and manage knowledge in the most effective way possible.

Undoubtedly, this ambition faces many challenges, such as the availability of regularly updated comprehensive and accurate data that provides the capacity to examine indicators and transform quantitative information into indicative conclusions on the basis of which investments can be made. Broader data availability will also allow for the measurement of trends across successive time periods for the purposes of forecasting and planning for the future. Political will and participatory action is required on the part of concerned, influential Arab authorities in order to allow the AKI to become a reliable mirror reflecting Arab realities, widely accepted for its utility in informing plans and policies to ensure the region's ongoing journey toward achieving comprehensive sustainable development.