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IJIKMMENA

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## EDITORIAL

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WELCOME to the inaugural issue of International Journal of Innovation and Knowledge Management in Middle East and North Africa (IJIKMMENA).

IJIKMMENA is the first international, multidisciplinary, refereed journal aims as a forum for academics, practitioners and policy-makers from around the world to exchange concepts, research, and best practices about innovation and knowledge management (KM) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

This unique initiative aims to integrate the study of these various disciplines to achieve sustainable development (SD) in MENA and help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policymakers within and outside the MENA region with a view to defining common, effective responses to tomorrow's challenges. IJIKMMENA is also intended as a first step in paving the way towards further reflection on the future position and role of the MENA region in the World.

### MENA REGION

Understanding the nature of problems, challenges and opportunities in the MENA region is a very difficult task for many people outside its territories. Defining the territories of the MENA



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region is the first obstacle that most researchers will face when examining any affairs within the region. The World Bank for example defines the MENA region as Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza and Yemen. Many other international institutions define MENA as extending from Morocco to Turkey along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean and as far east as Iran and south to the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. And while some recent books (Smith, 2006) about the region argue that it would be misleading to include countries like Sudan as part of MENA, these neighbouring countries have also been referred to as part of the MENA region by different scholars and institutions (see Henry and Springborg, 2001). Therefore, the definition of the MENA region is often unclear and so far there is no single definition that fully captures the different key historical, cultural and contemporary factors such as Islam, oil, role of the USA, colonialism and the foundation of the state of Israel, but by being clear about our meaning of the region and the underlying assumptions, we can progress our understanding of the MENA region and its future challenges and opportunities.

### **THEME**

Many scholars consider the MENA region as one of the most important emerging parts of the world economy in the 21st century. MENA is also strategically vital as it produces the majority of the world's oil. However despite the region's oil, most MENA countries score lower on Human Development Index (HDI) world ranking, with GDP, productivity and investment rates well below the global average. It is, therefore, becoming widely accepted that the dominant economic model of the region – based on the public sector, oil incomes and

workers' remittances – is not up to the challenges of modern globalisation and the needs of advanced knowledge-based societies. Given the apparently contradictory needs of economic growth and environmental conservation, it comes as no surprise that KM, innovation and SD have had such a powerful influence in contemporary discussions on the future of the region.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of IJIKMMENA is to promote the international exchange of knowledge, ideas and information about the very best research undertaken about MENA and critically analysing key factors that are influencing and influenced by innovation and KM in the MENA region. These key factors such as economy; infrastructure; development; education; technology; etc are essential for achieving business excellence and competitiveness in the MENA region. Therefore, IJIKMMENA will have a significant role to play in bridging the knowledge divide between MENA and the rest of the world and therefore help in the rapid generation and diffusion of knowledge within MENA. Moreover IJIKMMENA will consider new perspectives in innovation and KM in MENA.

## **CONTENTS**

IJIKMMENA publishes original papers, review papers, conceptual papers, technical reports, case studies, conference reports, management reports, book reviews, notes, commentaries, and news. IJIKMMENA particularly encourages papers that significantly bring new knowledge to the area both for academics and practitioners. Special Issues devoted to important topics about IJIKMMENA will occasionally be published.

Although the general theme and target will be innovation and KM, there is no limitation to the articles that will be considered by IJIKMMENA. Articles can address these topics theoretically or empirically through either a descriptive or critical approach. IJIKMMENA particularly encourages articles that significantly bring new knowledge to the area both for academics and practitioners. The following issues are for guidance only and are not restrictive:

- Innovation management
- Knowledge management
- Knowledge transfer
- Knowledge management framework
- Managing change and innovation in business
- Community of practice
- Education
- Human resource management for the knowledge economy; assessing current transformation practices and building local competences in innovation and leadership
- Information management
- Information and communication technologies
- information systems/technology and e-commerce

- Intelligent transportation systems
- Strategic management and planning and strategic innovation models.
- Technical change
- Impact of innovation and/or knowledge upon the productivity increase/enhancement
- Content management
- Taxonomy
- UN millennium development goals
- Sustainable development
- Knowledge-based economy; transforming the oil-based economy to a diverse knowledge-intensive economy based on innovation
- Learning from best practices, lessons from other nations as well as future policies in the region

### **EDITORIAL BOARD**

IJKMMENA editorial committee is truly international in terms of the wide range of specialisation of its members and the validated academic background that they bring to bear on the quality of the review and the geographic areas (within and outside MENA) from where they have come with different editorial experience.

The response to our inaugural issue has been so high with many high quality papers received covering a wide range of focus and scope of IJIKMMENA. The papers we selected have an interesting profile for the inaugural issue covering a wide spectrum of topics and focus. It is hoped that the ensemble of papers presented in this first issue will help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policymakers that will ultimately lead to a more integrated and multidisciplinary approach to SD. Finally we hope you find our inaugural edition to be interesting and thought provoking and look forward to receiving your valuable submission and comments so we can continue to serve your needs to the very best of our ability.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We are very grateful to all the members of our editorial board for their continuous support, valuable time and efforts. Our most sincere thanks go to all of the authors who shared their expertise and knowledge with the readers of IJIKMMENA.

Finally we thank our manuscript reviewers who kindly provided invaluable comments that have enriched the quality of the papers in this issue.

### **REFERENCES**

- Henry, C.M. and Springborg, R. (2001) *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, D. (2006) *The State of the Middle East. An Atlas of Conflict and Resolution*, London, UK:Earthscan.