



INCONET-GCC research priorities
Focus on the ICT
Opportunities and Prospects for R&D
Collaboration with GCC Countries

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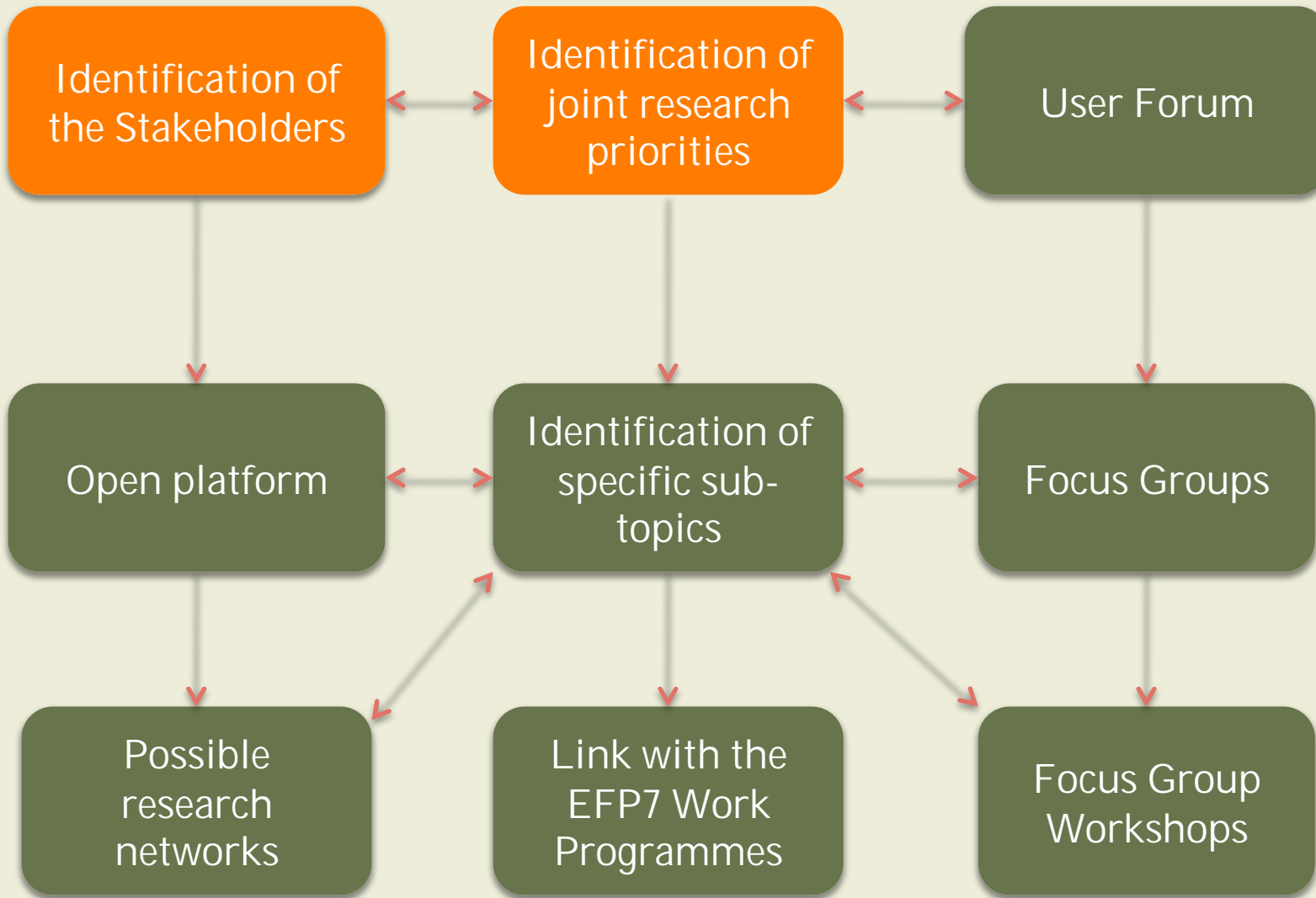
INCONET Objectives

1. Develop and Support the bi-regional dialogue
2. Identify common interests in R&D area
3. Support capacity building activities
4. Enhance interaction between different cooperation instruments

INCONET-GCC Firsts Targets

To identify several mutual research areas of interest between the EU and GCC, with the aim of strengthening and benefit from S&T cooperation.

1. Identification of joint research priorities
2. Identification of specific sub-topics
3. Create a users forum and specific focus groups
4. Possible research networks



Identification of the main domain of common interest

	Bahrain		Kuwait		Oman		Qatar		Saudi Arabia		UAE		Yemen	
	NP	RP	NP	RP	NP	RP	NP	RP	NP	RP	NP	RP	NP	RP
Water	X	X				X		X		X		?	X	
Energy	X					X		X		X		?		
ICT						X	X	X		X		X		
Environment	X					X		X		X		X		
Social Science							X					X	X	
Agriculture & Food	X	X			X					X		X		

ICT in the Arabic Countries

ICT represent one of the pillars for the establishment of a knowledge society

Arabic Countries have made noteworthy progress in most of ITC aspects, especially in infrastructures.

In 2008, the level of development in technological performance exceeded those observed in all other region of the world.

In particular, four GCC countries, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, have been listed among the fifth most ready to utilize ICT (World Economic Forum, 2008)

ICT in the Arabic Countries

Scrutiny of the Arab knowledge reveals that the digital gap remains important

Steps are needed at various levels

- Technology policies and regulations
- Issues related to the Arabic language usage
- Disparity between the Arab states in the use of new technologies and the use and production of Arabic digital content

Arabic Language in Internet

The access of Arabic speakers to the internet is close to 17% of the Arabic population and close to the Chinese speakers penetration rate

The rate of the Chinese web pages is higher

The grow rate in Arabic speaking Internet users is the highest among the top ten languages

ICT in the GCC

GCC countries have finalized policies, strategies and action plans concerning ITC and its regulations

UAE stand out in the implementation in numerous activities

Strategic decisions taken in many countries have given the higher priority to infrastructure issues and legislation and not an equivalent attention to applications, digital content and use of Arabic language

ICT Sectors in the GCC

ICT applications fulfill a very important role in building a knowledge based society in the Arabic world

- E-government services
(*UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, S.A.*)
- ICT and education (*UAE, Qatar*)
- Technology and social development
- E-Commerce (*Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain*)
- Technology applications for healthcare

Identification of the main domain of common interest

- Communication & Sensors Network
Health, Education & Security
- Microwaves Systems
Safety, Security, Communication & Navigation
- Electromagnetic Imaging
Optimisation of Communication Systems,
Remote Sensing & Health

Identification of the main domain of common interest

Areas

- Electromagnetic Imaging
- Microwaves
- Communications and Network
- Wireless Communications & Sensor Networks
- LASERS
- Multiple input Multiple Output systems
- Cloud Computing
- Arabization & Arabic Content

Stakeholder

- KAUST (S.A)
- KSU (S.A)
- KFUPM (S.A)
- KACST (S.A)

- QU (Qatar)
- Masdar IST (UAE)
- QSTP (Qatar)
- CMU-Q (Qatar)

Implementation

- Harmonization of the information
- Choice of on the priority subjects
- In-deep investigation of the selected domains
- Selection of the specific subtopics
- Creation of working groups and networks on selected topics
- Selection of case studies

Case Studies and Cooperation Networks

- Identification of case studies with the following criteria
 - National priorities
 - Bi-lateral priorities
 - Stakeholders Communities
 - Regional and International Impacts
 - Common GCC countries interests
 - Multidisciplinary Implications

ICT Opportunities for cooperation in the GCC

Progress in knowledge distribution generation

National development of strategies to realize an integrated vision of knowledge.

Development of applications to strength economic and social development efforts

Cooperation between Arab national institutions and with international organizations

Development of new technologies to handle recognition, speech and semantics to preserve the language.

Preliminary but exhaustive survey of the existing activities and national R&D priorities.

First raw selection of the priority subjects of common interest.

The example of Qatar

- Qatar's leadership recognized that information and communication technology is integral to realizing a prosperous future for its citizens.
- ICT_QATAR, the government's ICT champion, has been working to develop a vibrant and innovative ICT sector that will:
 - Fuel Qatar's economy
 - Promote democratic processes,
 - Offer world-class healthcare to all citizens,
 - Provide learners with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a global economy.

The overall picture

Qatar ranks among the top three in the Arab world

In terms of combined performance in basic ICT indicators

Key ICT Indicator	World Rank	Arab Rank
PCs per 100 Inhabitants	31 (out of 192)	2
Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants	64 (out of 203)	3
Mobile Subscriptions per 100 Inhabitants	55 (out of 203)	4
Fixed Telephone Lines per 100 inhabitants	89 (out of 203)	3
Broadband Internet Subscriptions per 100 Inhabitants	58 (out of 203)	3

Source: UN, ITU, and Madar Research 2008 Reports

Table 2: Qatar's Performance in Main ICT Indicators

ICT Qatar – Education Sector

Country	PCs per 100 Students
Qatar	12.7 ¹
Bahrain	5.2 ²
Jordan	5.0 ³
UAE	4.0 ⁴
Syria	1.2 ⁵

Sources: 1 School Executive Survey, 2008

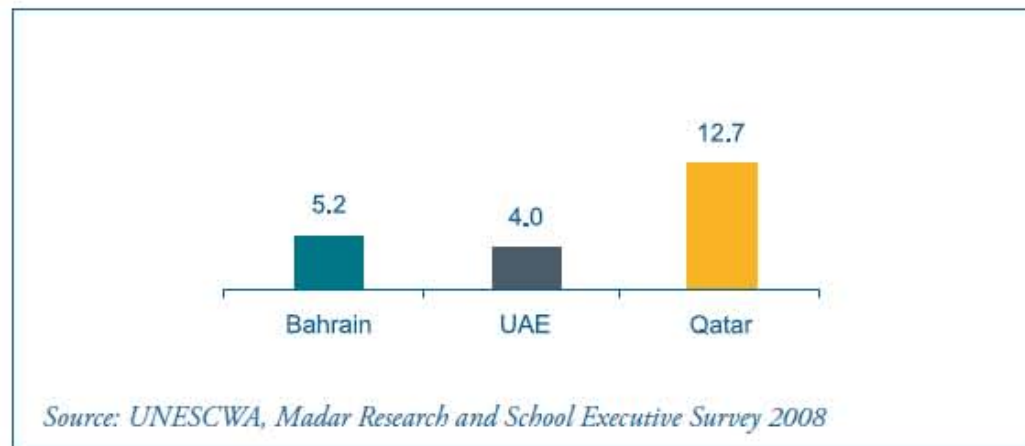
2 Profile of the Information Society - Kingdom of Bahrain - 2003, UNESCWA

3 Regional Profile of the Information Society in Western Asia - 2007, UNESCWA

4 Madar Research, 2008

5 Regional Profile of the Information Society in Western Asia - 2007, UNESCWA

Table 2: Arab Benchmark of All PCs at School (per 100 Students)



Source: UNESCWA, Madar Research and School Executive Survey 2008

Figure 3: Arab Benchmark of All PCs at School (per 100 Students)

The way ahead

- In near future, Qatar will re-evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts to connect people and institutions to the technologies that enrich lives and drive economic competitiveness.
- Qatar has begun to lay a strong foundation for sustainable economic and social development.
- Qatar's people, institutions, and government have made steady progress in adopting ICT into daily life but much work still remains.
- The country must accelerate its efforts in order to realize the nation's vision of a flexible, diversified economy that benefits all who live and work in Qatar.