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SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



Invitation to attend the conference

Empowering the future: Energy Transition and Economic Diversification in Arab Countries

15-16 September 2025
API - State of Kuwait

1. Conference Background

Arab countries are at a critical crossroads, facing unprecedented challenges due to climate change, concerted international efforts to accelerate the energy transition away from fossil fuels, and the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, all of which significantly affect the development process and its sustainability. Oil-exporting Arab countries are facing serious problems linked to the volatility of international oil prices, which make dependence on oil an unstable source of income, especially considering the accelerating global transition to renewable energies and pressure to reduce carbon emissions, which threaten long-term oil demand. On the other hand, oil-importing Arab countries face different but equally important challenges to those faced by oil-exporting countries, the most important of which are high energy import bills and dependence on public energy subsidies, leading to increased depletion of financial resources, little financial room for maneuver, exacerbation of debt risks and low capacity to finance productive projects. Whether they are oil exporters or importers, they are all confronted with the effects of climate change, which negatively affect infrastructure, economic activities, the quality of economic growth and employment opportunities, particularly in sensitive sectors such as agriculture and water, in addition to the shortage of skilled personnel in non-oil sectors such as technology and industry, the limited financial resources needed to support economic transformation and investment in new sectors, the technology gap, low investment in innovation, the quality of development institutions and the planning system.

This overlap between the different challenges and risks facing Arab countries complicates priorities and hampers, to varying degrees, the economic diversification efforts that have been underway for decades, and calls for bold and comprehensive structural reforms that embrace innovation, strengthen regional cooperation and develop flexible policies that combine energy transformation, economic diversification and improve competitiveness in the age of the knowledge economy and artificial intelligence.

2. Objectives

- **Highlight the various challenges and issues facing the process of economic diversification and energy transformation in Arab countries, particularly those related to industrial policies, financing, technology and human capital, whose performance has affected, in one way or another, the level of Arab development and the associated risks.**
- **Explore visions and policies that crystallize a new framework for developing a more promising development horizon based on a realistic approach capable of addressing the most important gaps and shortcomings in the structure of Arab economies in the light of growing climate risks, digital transformation and AI to accelerate energy transformation and strengthen economic diversification and competitiveness.**

3. Themes

This conference aims to address the multidimensional challenges and opportunities associated with the requirements of energy transformation and economic diversification in Arab countries to achieve the desired sustainability, along the following themes:

- **Challenges facing Arab economies considering fluctuating energy prices and growing climate risks (implications of oil price fluctuations, climate change and water scarcity on growth, macro stability, financial stability and labor markets).**
- **The role of the fourth industrial revolution in energy transition and economic diversification (the role of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and automation in improving energy efficiency and reducing costs - promoting entrepreneurship and green start-ups in the Arab region - strengthening human capital and rehabilitating the workforce - digital infrastructure and institutions supporting the industries of the fourth industrial revolution).**
- **Energy diversity role in the transition to the green economy (electrical energy storage technologies and grid integration for renewable energies - carbon reduction in heavy industries through clean energy solutions).**
- **Diversification and sophistication of the economy and strengthening national competitiveness (services and their role in diversifying the economy - promoting tourism, logistics, manufacturing and knowledge and technology-intensive non-oil sectors - the circular economy approach to sustainable growth - the new roles of small and**

medium-sized enterprises in diversifying the economy - promoting innovative systems and knowledge-based economies).

- **Structural transformation, diversification and addressing labor market imbalances (the impact of green energy projects on unemployment rates - the role of education systems in bridging the skills gap in emerging industries and accelerating economic diversification - the effectiveness of social protection systems during periods of economic transformation).**
- **New industrial policies and governance to promote sustainability (establishing policy incentives and regulatory frameworks for renewable energy adoption, national policies and Arab cooperation for economic reform and diversification - addressing regulatory challenges in clean energy projects - the role of international organizations and partnerships in supporting transformations in the region - governance structures to promote equitable and comprehensive economic diversification).**
- **Financing energy transition and economic diversification (the role of local and international investments in accelerating energy transition and economic diversification - the contribution of Arab sovereign wealth funds and development banks to economic diversification - the role of alternative financing mechanisms and debt sustainability - risk management strategies for investors and governments during the transition period, and public-private partnerships to develop renewable energy infrastructure).**

4. Guidelines and Calendar

We welcome original research projects based on empirical research or case studies. The research projects should preferably address one of the proposed themes and provide viable recommendations for accelerating the energy transition and diversifying the economy in Arab countries.

- Deadline to submit a research proposal with an updated CV (to conference2025@api.org.kw): March 2, 2025 **(Extended to April 15, 2025).**
- Proposals must include the title, primary research question, methodology, and outline, not exceeding 500 words in Arabic or English.
- Notice of acceptance or rejection of the research proposal: April 1, 2025 **(Extended to May 1, 2025)**
- Deadline for submission of full research papers (not exceeding 7000 words / following the general writing and referencing guidelines): July 1, 2025.
- Notice of acceptance or rejection: mid-August 2025.
- Conference Date: 15/16 September 2025.
- Research proposals and papers will undergo a standard peer review process.
- Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered for one author per paper. Details of visas and other logistical information will be communicated in due course.

Participants will have the opportunity to publish their manuscripts in the Journal of Development and Economic Policies (special issue) after complying with the journal's peer review and publication guidelines.

5. Organizers

- The Arab Planning Institute (API) – Kuwait.
- Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government - Dubai - UAE.
- Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) – Kuwait.

6. Conference Language

Arabic and English (Translation services available).

7. Conference Venue

Arab Planning Institute – State of Kuwait.