UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

*Empowered lives.*
*Resilient nations.*

**Project Title:** Arab Development Portal

**Project Number:** 116151

**Implementing Partner:** UNDP

**Start - End Date:** April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2022

**RPD Outcome(s):** Accelerate the structural transformation of productive capacities in a sustainable and inclusive manner. (Outcome 1)

**Expected Project Output(s):** 1) Users' access to high-quality data and information on development topics in the Arab region enhanced.

2) Data users and producers' capacity strengthened.

**Agreed by (Signature):**

**Name:** Khaled Abdelshafi

**Date:**

1

## I. Project context and emerging challenges

The Arab Development Portal (ADP) is an initiative of the Coordination Group of Arab, National and Regional Development Institutions (CG) to create a knowledge platform which promotes timely and high-quality knowledge sharing to generate opportunities for development and rising living standards in the Arab World. By having access to and effectively using knowledge resources, individuals, firms and communities can improve their individual and collective well-being, thereby contributing to overall sustainable development.

At a time when the number of internet users in the Arab world is expected reached around 197 million by 2017, and an internet penetration of over 51 percent from 32 percent in 2012, investing in an open online platform stands as a unique opportunity to enhance the quality of information accessed on development in the Arab region.

Despite recent improvements, data and resources on development issues in the Arab World are either out of date or irregular reliability, as is the case of many other regions. However, when the information is present, it is very often fragmented across multiple international, regional and national sources. This is equally challenging for the same country, where the presence of a dynamic and user-friendly national platforms on various development topics is still missing. Additionally, when information is present, many potential users lack the basic skills to understand and analyses data and statistics as evidenced by the extensive focus groups conducted by the ADP in the inception phase.

To address these gaps, the CG in partnership with the UNDP launched the ADP initiative to improve the scope, depth, reliability, availability and use of high quality development information to support development progress in the Arab World. The primary target audiences include decision-makers in the public sector, private sector entrepreneurs and investors, academia, media and civil society with an active interest in development efforts in the Arab World.

### Achievements and challenges of previous phases

Phase I proved insightful in designing a project that has actively promoted the spread of quality knowledge; in terms of identifying the balance between demand and supply in the market of knowledge portals. A careful examination of knowledge produced at the national level indicated the need for a body to consolidate data and enhance its accessibility in a more user-friendly manner. In most Arab countries, data produced by the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) is not published in the form of a digitalized database, and it is offered in many cases as statistical year books that are not user friendly and time consuming for users interested in conducting statistical analysis or visualizing the data.

The preliminary assessment of Phase I proved that the challenge of being "all things to all people" should be carefully re-examined in a strategic manner to ensure sustainability and differentiation in terms of content development and functionality.

Phase II proved equally enlightening by identifying potential areas of intervention for ADP, namely in the area of data harmonization and standardization at the level of official statistics published at the national level. As such, a dynamic, bi-lingual, multi-source and interactive database was developed under this phase. It included data produced by NSOs in addition to that produced by international organizations and offered data visualization and data export facilities and offered a rich depository of publications.

The preliminary assessment of Phase II and the feedback received from the CG and other stakeholders indicated that there is a need to expand the role of the ADP as service hub on data management, analysis,

visualization, dissemination and sharing. While many international organizations and UN agencies invest in data production, there is a gap in the provision of services that complement the whole data value chain, from production to analysis and dissemination.

Phase I and II showed that by enhancing the e-accessibility of users to official statistics, citizens will become more aware about the status of development in their countries, make fact-based opinions, and contribute effectively to the development of their countries. This also emphasized the need to reach out to diverse data communities. With this in mind, "Phase Three and Beyond" was signed in January 2016 following an agreement with the members of the CG to adopt a three-year period implemented by UNDP and within a scope referred to as "Scope 1.5". As such, within the scope for Phase III, the ADP maintained the scope of work identified in Phase II in terms of producing statistical and analytical content but also called for enhancing the role of the Portal in advancing the capacities of NSOs and other data communities such as youth and journalists.

Additionally, and with the adoption of the United Nations of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, Phase III also included the development of a regional SDGs Tracking Tool together with the provision of services to governments to help improve the data ecosystem to advance evidence-based decision-making and monitoring within a participatory framework that reaches out to traditional and non-traditional data communities. This phase also witnessed the establishment of the ADP Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) which had an important role in guiding the development and scope of Phase IV.

*Implementation and scope of Phase IV*

The OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed in Vienna, on 20, May 2019 a new three-year partnership agreement in support of the ADP.

Based on the feedback received from the CG Technical Focal Team (29 July 2018), members of the Strategic Advisory Board (4 September 2018) and the most recent meeting with the CG Heads of Operations (11 September 2018), it was agreed that the new three-year Phase IV of the ADP will be implemented by UNDP. However, the CG can opt to discontinue the UNDP-led ADP implementation team, and the project would then enter a six-month exit/transition mode. The life span of online platforms is usually guaranteed by the ability of these portals to maintain their active presence, and as such, the adopted modality offers a flexible set-up for the CG to take governance-relevant decisions that are not time bound, yet ensure that the ADP remains functioning smoothly and is not disrupted for any reason.

The scope of this Phase IV is in line with that of Phase III, it mainly aims to: i) produce more high-end analytical products on the status of development in the Arab region; ii) enhance its outreach/dissemination; iii) strengthen the quality assurance mechanism; iv) support data journalism and empower youth to understand analytical content and use data; and v) design sustainable business models to invest in technology-driven solutions.

# I. RESULTS FRAMEWORK

| EXPECTED OUTPUTS | OUTPUT INDICATORS[1] | DATA SOURCE | BASELINE | | TARGETS | | | DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | VALUE | YR | YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 | |
| **Output 1:** Users' access to high-quality knowledge on development topics in the Arab region enhanced | 1.Degree of timeliness, comprehensiveness and diversity of content published on the portal (limited, moderate, high, significant) | Internati onal and national sources (mainly National statistica l offices and ministrie s in the Arab states) | 1. Moderate (14 development topics, 22 Arab countries, 5400 indicators, country and thematic overviews updated). | 2019 (March 2019) | 1. High | 1. High | 1. Significant | An end-users survey assessment; Interviews |
| | 2.Level of outreach and dissemination (low, moderate, high, significant) | | 2. Moderate | | 2. High | 2. High | 2. Significant | |

[1] It is recommended that projects use output indicators from the Strategic Plan, as relevant, in addition to project-specific results indicators

| Output 2: Data users and producers' capacity strengthened | 1. Level of support to data users/producers on data usage, visualization and dissemination provided (limited, moderate, significant, outstanding)  2. Level of cooperation with strategic partners (limited, moderate, significant, outstanding) | International and national sources (mainly National statistical offices and ministries in the Arab states) | 1. Moderate (2 regional training workshops with NSOs, 2 e-learning courses produced; 3 country missions; Visualize 2030, data journalism workshop)  2. Limited | 2019 (March 2019) | 1. Significant  2. Moderate | 1. Significant  2. Significant | 1. Outstanding  2. Significant | An end-users survey assessment; Interviews; Studies by experts; Strategic advisory board recommendations; Roundtables; Follow-up document |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

## II. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans: *[Note: monitoring and evaluation plans should be adapted to project context, as needed]*

### Monitoring Plan

| Monitoring Activity | Purpose | Frequency | Expected Action | Partners (if joint) | Cost (if any) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Track results progress | Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs. | Quarterly, or in the frequency stated for each indicator in the RRF. | Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management. | | tbd |
| Monitor and Manage Risk | Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk. | Quarterly | Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken. | | tbd |
| Learn | Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project. | At least annually | Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions. | | tbd |
| Annual Project Quality Assurance | The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project. | Annually | Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance. | | tbd |

| | Purpose | Frequency | Expected Action | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Review and Make Course Corrections** | Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making. | At least annually | Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections. | tbd |
| **Project Report** | A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period. | Annually, and at the end of the project (final report) | | |
| **Project Review (Project Board)** | The Project Board will hold a project reviews to assess the performance of the project and appraise the Annual Work Plan for the following year. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences. | At least annually | Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified. | tbd |

**Evaluation Plan**[2]

| Evaluation Title | Partners (if joint) | Related Strategic Plan Output | SP Outcome | Planned Completion Date | Key Evaluation Stakeholders | Cost and Source of Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project Mid-Term Evaluation | OFID | (Strategic Plan 1.1.1) | SP Outcome 1: Accelerate the structural | September 2020 | OFID, UNDP | USD 20,000 |

---

[2] Optional, if needed

| | |
|---|---|
| transformation of productive capacities in a sustainable and inclusive manner. | Capacities developed to analyse progress towards the SDGs, using innovative and data-driven solutions) |

## III. Multi-Year Work Plan [3,4]

*All anticipated programmatic and operational costs to support the project, including development effectiveness and implementation support arrangements, need to be identified, estimated and fully costed in the project budget under the relevant output(s). This includes activities that directly support the project, such as communication, human resources, procurement, finance, audit, policy advisory, quality assurance, reporting, management, etc. All services which are directly related to the project need to be disclosed transparently in the project document.*

| EXPECTED OUTPUTS | PLANNED ACTIVITIES | Planned Budget by Year | | | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | PLANNED BUDGET | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | | Funding Source | Budget Description | Amount |
| **Output 1:**<br><br>**Users' access to high-quality knowledge on development topics in the Arab region enhanced**<br><br>Indicators:<br>1. Degree of timeliness, comprehensiveness and diversity of content published on the portal (limited, moderate, high, significant)<br>2. Level of outreach and dissemination (low, | **1.1 Producing high-quality and timely content**<br><br>• Contracting thematic experts<br>• Contracting bloggers and editors<br>• Editing and translation of the final drafts submitted (English and Arabic)<br>• Updating and validation of all facts and data | 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | UNDP | OFID | Contractual Services | |
| | | | | | | | Staff | |
| | | | | | | | Travel | **600,000** |
| | | | | | | | Miscellaneous | |

---

[3] Cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness costs to be charged to the project are defined in the Executive Board decision DP/2010/32

[4] Changes to a project budget affecting the scope (outputs), completion date, or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that must be signed by the project board. In other cases, the UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied for example when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

moderate, high, significant)

Baselines:

1. Moderate (14 development topics, 22 Arab countries, 5400 indicators, country and thematic overviews updated).

2. Moderate

Targets (Y3 cumulative):

1. Significant
2. Significant

**1.2 Adding new features to the data portal and visualization tools**

- Contracting a web developer to add advanced data visualization tools
- Producing tutorials on the newly added features

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | UNDP | OFID | Contractual Services | **600,000** |
| | | | | | Staff | |
| | | | | | Miscellaneous | |

- Conducting quality assurance
- Conducting an evaluation of the ADP

**1.3 Designing and implementing the outreach and dissemination strategy of ADP**

- Producing outreach/dissemination products: brochure, leaflet, pamphlet
- Drafting creative social media content
- Contracting a content

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | UNDP | OFID | Contractual Services | **300,000** |
| | | | | | Staff | |
| | | | | | Miscellaneous | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | specialist to set the outreach dissemination strategy<br>• Contracting a graphic designer to produce infographics and visual content |

| Sub-Total for Output 1 | | | | | | 1,500,000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output 2:**<br>**Data users and producers' capacity strengthened**<br><br>Indicators:<br>1. Level of support to data users/producers on data usage, visualization and dissemination provided (limited, moderate, significant, outstanding)<br>2. Level of cooperation with strategic partners (limited, moderate, significant, outstanding)<br><br>Baselines:<br>1. Moderate (2 regional training workshops with NSOs, 2 e-learning courses produced; 3 country | **2.1 Holding regional/national workshops/courses/missions to support data users/producers on data usage, visualization and dissemination**<br>• Holding 12 events per year in the Arab region | 670,000 | 670,000 | 670,000 | UNDP<br>OFID | Contractual Services<br>Travel<br>Staff<br>Miscellaneous | 2,010,000 |

11

missions; Visualize 2030, data journalism workshop)
2. Limited

<u>Targets (Y3 cumulative):</u>
1. Outstanding
2. Significant

**Sub-Total for Output 2** — 2,010,000

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Common and Shared Services (14%)** | 128,700 | 128,700 | 128,700 | UNDP | OFID | 386,100 |
| **UNDP Management General Support (8%)** | 93,600 | 93,600 | 93,600 | UNDP | OFID | 280,800 |
| **Total** | 1,392,300 | 1,392,300 | 1,392,300 | UNDP | OFID | 4,176,900 |

**Annex 1: RISK Analysis**

| # | Description | Date Identified | Type | Impact & Probability | Countermeasures / Mngt response | Owner | Submitted, updated by | Last Update | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sustaining the ADP and ensuring a smooth exit strategy from UNDP direct implementation is to be decided by the 10 institutions that form the Coordination Group, and the latter has not reached a consensus on the nature of the exit or whether they wish to opt for delinking from UNDP in the short-term. | Phase IV Formulation Stage | Strategic | P: 1 I: 1 | • Phase IV legal agreement stipulates a 6-month notice period for the UNDP to hand-over the ADP irrespective of the nature of the exit strategy. | UNDP Regional Programme | UNDP Regional Programme | Start of Phase IV | Being monitored |
| 2 | A Fast-Changing Data Ecosystem and Technology | Phase IV Formulation Stage | Other: Technical/Sco pe of Work | P:3 I: 4 | • Establishment of a joint UNDP-CG Technical Focal Team ensures that changes that are discussed in due time to be communicated to senior decision-makers at the respective insittutions. | UNDP Regional Programme | UNDP Regional Programme | Start of Phase IV | Being monitored |

| 3 | Availability of competent national and regional senior statisticians and database experts who are Arabic-speakers to support country offices in restructuring their databases and developing their own SDGs Tracking Tools. | Phase IV Formulation Stage | Operational | P: 4 I: 4 | • Collaboration with academic institutions, EU Stat and UN agencies to develop a pool of competent candidates. • Training the capacity of local experts by offering reference training modules. | UNDP Regional Programme | UNDP Regional Programme | Start of Phase IV | Being monitored |