

**SABA**  
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Working Alongside KIPO to Establish  
National IP Strategy

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**QATAR | WORKING ALONGSIDE KIPO TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL IP STRATEGY**

QATAR

**In a significant move towards bolstering international cooperation in intellectual property (IP), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar have agreed to work closely to develop Qatar's national IP strategy. This collaboration marks an important step in enhancing bilateral ties and sharing expertise in the realm of IP rights.**

The primary focus of this collaboration is the development of a national IP strategy for Qatar. This strategy will encompass the formulation of a national vision and objectives regarding IP, as well as the development of strategic tasks aimed at the creation, protection, and utilization of IP rights.

The partnership with Qatar is the latest in KIPO's efforts to extend its influence and cooperation in the Middle East. Drawing on its successful experiences and skills, KIPO is expected to play a pivotal role in assisting Qatar to establish a robust and effective national IP framework.

As the partnership progresses, it is anticipated that the initiatives undertaken will yield tangible results, benefiting not just the two countries but also setting a precedent for international cooperation in the field of intellectual property.

## GCC | INNOVATION AND PATENTS AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH

**In today's global economy, innovation plays a vital role in driving growth and fostering development. Countries that invest in innovation can create new products and services, improve productivity, and stimulate economic growth.** The innovation index is a tool used to measure a country's innovation performance, and it has become a key metric for policymakers and investors to evaluate a country's economic potential. In the GCC region, innovation is an integral part in the different countries' forward-looking visions for growth and sustainability.

The innovation index is a composite indicator that measures a country's innovation performance. It takes into account factors such as research and development (R&D) investment, patent applications, and high-tech exports.

The index is used to rank countries based on their innovation performance. The higher a country's innovation index, the more innovative it is considered. Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between innovation index and economic growth. Countries that perform well in the innovation index tend to have higher economic growth rates. The top 10 economies in 2022 based on the Global Innovation Index (GII) can be found in Table I, which also lists the GI for the GCC countries. As can be seen, since UAE's vision was launched back in 2010, the earliest country in the region to launch such an initiative, the UAE presently ranks the highest of the GCC countries, coming in at rank 31.



## GCC | INNOVATION AND PATENTS AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH



GII RANK	ECONOMY	SCORE
1	Switzerland	64.6
2	United States	61.8
3	Sweden	61.6
4	United Kingdom	59.7
5	Netherlands	58.0
6	Republic of Korea	57.8
7	Singapore	57.3
8	Germany	57.2
9	Finland	56.9
10	Denmark	55.9
31	United Arab Emirates	42.1
51	Saudi Arabia	33.4
52	Qatar	32.9
62	Kuwait	29.2
72	Bahrain	28.0
79	Oman	26.8

Source: Global Innovation Index Database, WIPO, 2022

Policymakers can use the innovation index to identify areas for improvement and develop policies to promote innovation. For example, a country with a low innovation index may need to increase R&D investment, improve intellectual property protection, or develop a more skilled workforce. By promoting innovation, policymakers can help stimulate economic growth and improve the standard of living for their citizens. Having recognized the importance of innovation, the GCC countries have made significant strides in promoting an innovation culture. Now, it is crucial for the private sector to capitalize on these government initiatives and foster a culture of innovation within their organizations.

Innovation can drive economic growth through various means. Firstly, it spurs the development of new products and services, which can create new markets and boost demand. This can lead to increased business activity, job creation, and higher incomes. Second, innovation can improve productivity, which can lead to cost savings and increased competitiveness.

GCC



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Finally, innovation can lead to the development of new industries and sectors, which can create new opportunities for growth. Innovation, more so than diversification, is key to unlocking value that cannot be reached by competing in the same playing field.

The essence of innovation may be described as change that unlocks new value. The process of unlocking value is built on well-known concepts and practices such as creativity, experimentation, prototyping, and others. A culture of innovation refers to a workplace environment that encourages employees to share and discuss creative ideas. This culture begins with a leadership of innovation which introduces, enables, and empowers individual innovation within the organization.

To create IP, first, a company needs to innovate. Whereas innovation may take place locally, within a company, its impact is global. Hence, a successful innovation requires answers to a solution for an unmet customer need, which solution should be built on a business model that allows for the solution to be monetized.

In a recent article published by McKinsey & Company, the authors found that “companies that harness the essentials of innovation see a substantial performance edge that separates

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them from others - with evidence that mastering innovation can generate economic profit that is 2.4 times higher than that of other players." There is no doubt that innovation, possibly more than diversification, is key to unlocking value that cannot be reached by competing in the same playing field. Innovation, by its essence, is the process of creating change that unlocks new value. The process of unlocking value is built on well-known concepts and practices such as creativity, experimentation, prototyping, and others.

Innovation and creativity are closely related but not synonymous.. Using creativity in business is important because it fosters unique and novel ideas. This novelty is a key component of innovation. The importance of innovation becomes more apparent during challenging times. Three typical reasons why innovation is crucial for any business are: (1) it allows adaptability, (2) it provides growth, and (3) it distinguishes businesses from competition. There are many tools and instruments that can help guide an organization into becoming an innovative

hub, capitalizing on its own human resources to drive innovation and growth.

In an article published in 2021 in Forbes , the author tackles the topic of "Why Innovation, Not Diversification, Is Key To The Oil And Gas Industry's Survival." A quick survey of patented technology in the oil and gas and downstream industry shows that the most common subject matters relate to exploration, production technologies, drilling and completion technologies and enhanced recovery methods. These innovations have undoubtedly ensured sustainability in a crowded industry competing for some of the same resources. More recently, innovators in the environmental and safety technologies are starting to see a spike ushering in an era for disruptive technology. Be it carbon footprint measurement and reduction, alternative treatment methods for cleaner derivatives, advanced management software or others, the innovators in this area are the ones addressing the needs for the clients of the future, thus ensuring continuous growth.



## GCC | INNOVATION AND PATENTS AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH



## TOP TEN SECTORS BASED ON AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: Q1 2018-Q1 2022

Power and utilities	13.53%
Retail and wholesale	10.39%
Financial services	4.44%
TMT	3.67%
Construction	-0.21%
Automotive	-2.85%
Healthcare	-2.98%
Aerospace and defence	-3.26%
Packaging	-5.88%
Oil and gas	-7.15%

Source: GlobalData Patent Analytics<sup>iii</sup>

According to a GlobalData Patent Analytics surveying patenting behavior, the oil and gas industry sector witnessed an average annual drop rate in patents of about 7% between Q1 2018 and Q1 2022; whereas the power and utilities sector witnessed an average annual growth rate in patents of 14% during the same period. The highest share in power generation relates to using solar-based technologies, but also key patented themes included climate change, emissions reductions, renewable energy, industrial automation and electric vehicles (EVs).

In summary, innovation is a key driver of economic growth because it helps to create new value and drive progress in a wide range of industries and sectors. It is crucial for economic growth because it leads to the creation of new products, services and business models that can increase productivity, efficiency and competitiveness. It can also lead to the development of new industries and the expansion of existing ones.



## MENA | REIMAGINED REMEDIES: NAVIGATING SECOND MEDICAL USE IN THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

In the diverse landscape of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, a significant shift is taking place in healthcare. The practice of drug repurposing - finding new therapeutic uses for existing medications - is emerging as a potent solution to the region's unique health challenges. As the demands on MENA's healthcare systems grow, the ability to maximize the potential of already-approved drugs can lead to rapid, cost-effective breakthroughs. This is not just about pharmaceutical innovation; it is a strategic approach that could redefine patient care.

Historically, drug repurposing has yielded some pleasantly surprising twists. Enter minoxidil, originally approved as an oral treatment for high blood pressure, patients began noticing something unusual - they were growing hair in unexpected places. This side effect paved the way for minoxidil's rebranding as Rogaine, a topical solution now celebrated worldwide for combatting hair loss.

Beyond its medical value, minoxidil's journey from a blood pressure medication to a staple in hair growth regimens underscores the delightful unpredictability in drug research, reminding us that solutions can often come from the most unexpected sources.

### *The MENA Landscape and Status of Second Medical Use*

The MENA region is a mosaic of different countries, each with its own unique healthcare challenges, ranging from lifestyle diseases in affluent nations like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to infectious diseases in conflict zones. In such a varied landscape, drug repurposing offers a promising avenue to address these challenges by making therapies available more quickly and potentially at lower costs.

Several MENA nations are showing a burgeoning interest in second medical use. Jordan, for instance, has been active in clinical trials for repurposed drugs, especially in the oncology sector. Meanwhile, nations like Egypt are drawing from their rich history of traditional medicine, seeing where old remedies and modern pharmaceuticals might intersect.

The MENA's regulatory landscape is multifaceted. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has recently been discussing harmonized patent regulations, which may play a pivotal role in second medical use patenting. However, the challenge remains: ensuring that repurposed drugs are both innovative enough to warrant patents and affordable enough to be accessible.





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The market potential for repurposed drugs in MENA is vast. With its young population, the region sees a rising prevalence of both non-communicable and infectious diseases. However, the journey of a repurposed drug from lab to market is fraught with challenges. Regulatory hurdles, competition from generics, and societal misconceptions can hinder a drug's trajectory.

### *Opportunities and Challenges*

Leveraging traditional medicine's vast knowledge, countries like Morocco or Oman can discover novel uses for existing drugs. Yet, the road is not smooth. Issues such as the prevalence of counterfeit drugs in markets like Iraq, varied regulatory standards, and the need for region-specific clinical evidence present challenges that must be navigated with care.

The future looks optimistic. With more nations investing in healthcare R&D and collaborations with international pharma giants becoming common, second medical use might soon become a mainstay in MENA's pharmaceutical landscape. Partnerships with academic institutions, enhanced public-private cooperation, and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) for drug repurposing can further boost this trend.

### *Integrating Traditional and Repurposed Uses: Metformin in Saudi Arabia*

In the bustling heart of the Kingdom's medical research centers, an old player emerges in a new avatar. Metformin, well known in the Saudi medical community for its efficacy in treating type 2 diabetes, is undergoing a transformation in its therapeutic role.

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The backdrop of this shift is grounded in Saudi Arabia's specific healthcare challenges. The country faces a dual burden: a high prevalence of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and a growing number of cancer cases. The Saudi Cancer Registry highlights that breast cancer, colorectal cancer, and prostate cancer are among the most frequently diagnosed.[1] In this context, the repositioning of Metformin serves as an enlightening example of how drug repurposing can meet regional healthcare needs.

Recent research suggests that Metformin might play a pivotal role in oncology.[2] Its proposed mechanism involves a decrease in the production and bioavailability of insulin and insulin-like growth factors, which are known to boost cancer cell proliferation. For Saudi Arabia, these findings hold particular promise. The drug's potential dual benefits could mean care that is more comprehensive for patients who grapple with both diabetes and cancer.

Local medical institutions in Saudi Arabia have shown keen interest in this repurposed role for Metformin. Preliminary studies and trials, sponsored by leading universities and healthcare centers, aim to explore the drug's efficacy tailored to the Saudi population's genetics and lifestyle. Furthermore, the nation's leading oncologists and endocrinologists have initiated discussions, training sessions, and symposia to disseminate knowledge on this topic.

The potential implications are manifold. If Metformin is adopted as a standard therapeutic option in oncology, it can offer a more cost-effective treatment pathway for Saudi patients. The integration of this drug into oncological regimens can also lead to more personalized therapeutic strategies, especially for patients who suffer from co-morbidities like diabetes.



## MENA | REIMAGINED REMEDIES: NAVIGATING SECOND MEDICAL USE IN THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE



### **Conclusion**

In the larger tapestry of MENA's pharmaceutical landscape, the Metformin narrative in Saudi Arabia exemplifies how traditional therapies can be re-envisioned to address contemporary challenges. It underscores the region's potential to lead in the realm of drug repurposing, given its unique medical needs and history.

Drug repurposing is not merely a chapter in pharmaceutical innovation; it is a potential game-changer. The stakes are high, with the promise of transforming healthcare landscapes across diverse nations. As we stand on the cusp of this medical frontier, the decisions made by stakeholders will shape not only the future of medicine but also the well-being of countless individuals. Embracing the full potential of second medical use is more than strategy - it is a commitment to pioneering a brighter, healthier future for all.

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