

Innovation as an Engine for Regional Development: Strengthening and Expanding the Abraham Accords in the Fields of Water, Food and Healthcare

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Highlights

The fields of water, food and healthcare offer a strategic opportunity for regional collaborations between Israel and countries that signed the Abraham Accords (the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan) and with potential candidates, including Saudi Arabia. In addition to the top-priority defense and security needs, countries in the region are attributing increasing importance to addressing acute challenges relating to water scarcity, food insecurity and improving public healthcare systems – as an integral part of their national development plans:

□ In relation to **water**, countries in the region are contending with

overexploitation of freshwater sources, a shortage of recycling and partial access to clean water. Israel offers proven solutions for desalination, wastewater recycling, smart water management and data-based forecasting technologies.

□ In relation to **food**, there is high dependence on imports, coupled with a desire to strengthen sustainable local production. Israel offers unique know-how in desert agriculture, precision irrigation, advanced cultivation technologies and food-tech solutions.

□ In relation to **healthcare**, relatively high morbidity rates, disparities in access to medicine in outlying regions and a growing need for personalized healthcare solutions create numerous opportunities for Israel, which is an innovation leader in fields such as digital medicine, telemedicine, genetic data analyses and bioinformatics.

Goal-oriented collaborations in these fields, harmonized with the target countries' needs and national vision, could enable Israel to establish an ongoing regional presence and deepen partnerships based on the values of stability, sustainability and innovation. Considering the inherent potential, this document recommends a policy based on four key guiding principles:

□ **Adapting Israeli solutions to local needs:** Adapting innovative Israeli technologies and services to government plans and SDGs in Abraham Accords countries, by creating partnerships with local governmental and private entities.

□ **Promoting integration into national ventures using a public-private partnership model (PPP):** Encouraging Israeli companies to participate in wide-scale national projects in the Middle East, led by sovereign funds, by establishing local branches in order to reduce legal and regulatory obstacles.

□ **Establishing a dedicated financial support mechanism:** Devising a system of state guarantees and risk insurance for Israeli business activities in Abraham Accords countries, focusing on markets such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to contend with project financing difficulties.

□ **Formulating of a multi-year strategic plan for international development:** Adding a humanitarian layer to Israel's commercial approach through joint ventures between Israel and Abraham Accords countries in developing countries, for the purposes of promoting regional stability and

humanitarian influence and establishing Israel's standing as a responsible partner.

Germany, the leading European country in advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and a strong supporter of regional integration in the Middle East, can play a key role in supporting and building this process, in conjunction with the European Union, which has already formed a strategic partnership with the Gulf states. A trilateral partnership between Israel, the Gulf states and Germany/the EU can become a significant engine for promoting stability, innovation and sustainable development in the region.

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