



Research Initiative on the Economics of the Middle East

Vision and Objective

Following the organization of an international symposium at Sciences Po Lille in October 2016 (<http://www.sciencespo-lille.eu/sites/default/files/prog-colloque.pdf>), we are pleased to announce a new research initiative on the economics of the Middle East. The overall objective of this initiative is to encourage economists and social scientists, especially early career scholars, to develop economic policies geared towards promoting economic prosperity and equity in the Middle East.

The research initiative will be a collaborative endeavour between four premier institutions of higher learning: Sciences-Po Lille, Heriot-Watt University, Oxford University and University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. Under the auspices of this initiative, annual workshops will be held to support promising scholarship in the area. The Workshops will be firmly grounded in a long-term vision that recognizes existing gaps in scholarship and encourages the development of a new understanding of Middle Eastern economies. The research initiative will also be open to multi-disciplinary approaches that could bring together perspectives from economics, political science, and history.

Why is such an initiative needed?

- there is no such collaborative initiative in any of the European academic centres. Existing programmes are either too security-centred or ignore the economic dimensions crucial to a deeper study of the region;
- too much of current economic research on the Middle East takes the existing institutions (and governments) as given, and too little of it focuses on how different institutions might assist the development of the region;
- younger scholars have few specialized forums to showcase their scholarship and interact with others interested in the same field. We will especially encourage fresh Phds and younger scholars who have typically few academic forums to present and publicize their work on the Middle East.

The workshop is to be held with the collaboration of Sciences-Po Lille, University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (IEDES), Heriot-Watt University (the Spatial Economics and Econometrics Centre) and Oxford University (the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and the Department of International Development). After Sciences-Po Lille, the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and Oxford University's Department of International Development will act as local hosts for the 2017 workshop. The Institute of Development Studies (IEDES) will act as the lead partner from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne for the organization of the 2018 workshop. Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh will host the 2019 workshop.

The founding members of the initiative are Abdallah Zouache (Sciences Po Lille), David Cobham (Heriot-Watt University), Adeel Malik (Oxford University), Mohamed-Ali Marouani (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne).