



## 15th Gulf Research Meeting 2025

Call for Papers: OPEN NOW

Deadline: 5 January 2025



The Gulf Research Center (GRC) is pleased to announce that we are accepting paper abstracts for the 15th annual Gulf Research Meeting (GRM), the annual academic conference highlighting critical issues of importance to the Gulf region and providing a basis for undertaking and engaging in academic and empirical research. GRM 2025 will take place in Cambridge (UK) from July 22-24, 2025.

GRM workshops cover a wide range of topics in the fields of politics, economics, gender, culture, energy, security, and the social sciences as they relate to the GCC states and the wider Gulf region.

### GRM 2025 Workshops:

1. GCC 2030 and Beyond: National Visions, Fintech, and the Future of Finance
2. Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism Strategies in the Gulf after COVID-19
3. Nature-Based Solutions for a Circular Economy Transformation in the GCC Countries
4. Net Zero Gulf Cities: Innovations and Sustainable Strategies
5. Great Power Competition in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges for Gulf Economic and Political Interests
6. GCC States and Non-Arab Regional Middle Powers: Opportunities and

Challenges Amidst Shifting Regional Balances

7. Power Relations Between the GCC and the Horn of Africa in an Uncertain World
8. Digital and Social Media Influencers Impact on Developing Country Image in Light of GCC National Visions
9. GCC Futurescapes: Past and Present
10. Internationalization of Higher Education in the Gulf: Reality or Fantasy?
11. Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC Countries: Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics

We welcome applications from both established academics/scholars as well as young and emerging researchers.

**For the descriptions of workshops and other information:**

<https://gulfresearchmeeting.net>.

**You are strongly invited to read the Participants Guidelines:**

<https://gulfresearchmeeting.net/w/GRM2025-ParticipantsGuidelines.pdf>

The GRM 2025 poster can be downloaded [here](#).

**Applications should be submitted at:**

<https://www.gulfresearchmeeting.net/register-paper-user>

For questions, please contact us at [grm@grc.net](mailto:grm@grc.net).

### ◆ GRC Events & Activities

Gulf Research Meeting (GRM) 2025: Call for Papers

GCC-MIKTA Roundtable: Strengthening Multilateralism in the Face of Global Challenges: A MIKTA Perspective

GRC Webinar: Saudi-Nordic Relations

GCC-Korea Cooperation Seminar

### ◆ GRC Programs

Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population (GLMM) Programme

Environmental Security and Sustainability Program

Cultural & Media Program

### ◆ GRC Publications

### ◆ GRC Participations

### ◆ GRC in the Media

# GCC-MIKTA Roundtable:

Strengthening Multilateralism in the Face of Global Challenges:  
A MIKTA Perspective



02

NOVEMBER 2024



**Gulf Research Center**  
Knowledge for All



**MIKTA**  
A partnership for progress



The Gulf Research Center (GRC), in coordination with the Embassy of Mexico to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is the coordinator of MIKTA this year, organized a roundtable meeting on November 14, 2024, that brought together ambassadors from MIKTA countries (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Türkiye, and Australia) to discuss their shared commitment to multilateralism in light of today's complex global challenges. As an alliance of influential middle powers from diverse regions, MIKTA represents a unique partnership with the potential to drive constructive change in international relations. The meeting marked the first meeting between the GCC and MIKTA as two blocs, emphasizing the increasing relevance of middle-power coalitions in mediating global issues, promoting economic stability, and addressing security concerns.

## A Unique Middle-Power Alliance

MIKTA's composition is unique in its cross-continental span, with each country holding significant economic weight within its respective region. Despite their geographical and cultural diversity, MIKTA members share a commitment to stability, development, and good governance, operating within different regional contexts that offer a broad perspective on global challenges. The ambassadors highlighted that MIKTA's diversity is an asset, enabling it to serve as a bridge between different parts of the world and to foster inclusive, multipolar governance. Through collaborative approaches, MIKTA can provide incentives for mediation processes, thus positioning itself as a stabilizing force in international affairs.





This meeting highlights how the world is navigating an era of unprecedented complexity in international relations, marked by ongoing conflicts and a shift toward a more multipolar, unpredictable global order. In this context, the MIKTA countries—Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Türkiye, and Australia—have recognized the pressing need for stronger multilateral frameworks to address these challenges. With regional stability increasingly impacted by global issues, ambassadors discussed how MIKTA has emerged as a coalition advocating for a multilateral approach as the optimal solution. The shared belief among MIKTA countries is that coordinated international efforts, rather than isolated national approaches, will be essential to tackling issues of security, development, and governance that now transcend borders.



By fostering closer regional ties, MIKTA intends to build a foundation that not only supports sustainable growth but also strengthens resilience against global economic and environmental shocks. This collaborative approach further underscores MIKTA and GCC openness to exploring opportunities for collaboration, including academic and policy research, where the two blocs can work together on shared goals.

It was discussed that in the past four years, the multilateral system has been significantly challenged by regional and trade security disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, introduced new vulnerabilities to global supply chains and trade routes, while security threats—such as Houthi attacks on maritime routes—have brought severe repercussions to regional trade and food security.

These crises have underscored the need for resilient, rules-based systems that can better withstand future shocks. While bilateral relations have strengthened in response to these challenges, the participants in the meeting echoed the need for “mini-lateral” partnerships, where smaller focused groups can address targeted issues within the larger multilateral system. Through such partnerships, plural-lateral frameworks can provide a pragmatic response to complex challenges, ensuring that international systems are adaptable, efficient, and better equipped to protect global trade and food security.

As a collection of countries with distinct cultural and economic backgrounds, MIKTA exemplifies the potential of diverse nations to work together toward a shared goal of global peace and sustainability. Türkiye in particular, has highlighted food security as a priority issue during its 2022 chairmanship of MIKTA, recognizing that this issue directly impacts global stability and requires immediate, collaborative action. The Turkish delegation emphasized MIKTA's potential as a “driving force” for effective global governance in today's multipolar world. By actively engaging in issues like food security, MIKTA showcases its commitment to constructive leadership, encouraging global cooperation for a more habitable, peaceful world.



## Conclusion

This seminar underscored the potential for GCC-MIKTA cooperation in fostering a resilient, rules-based multilateral system. Both blocs, as influential middle powers, can work together to address global challenges through knowledge exchange, economic cooperation, and targeted development programs. This partnership exemplifies the role of multilateralism in driving sustainable growth and stability amid an increasingly unpredictable world order.

Overall, the meeting highlighted the role of MIKTA in promoting multilateralism as the foundation of a stable global order. The five countries are committed to engaging in various bilateral and multilateral dialogues, including the G7 and other global forums, advocating for a rules-based trading system that reinforces the values of transparency, inclusivity, and shared responsibility.

The collective aim of MIKTA is to act as a catalyst for positive change, fostering a cooperative environment where like-minded nations can come together to pursue sustainable development and address the global challenges of our time.

Through strategic partnerships with the GCC and beyond, MIKTA seeks to develop a resilient international framework that supports sustainable development, global governance, and long term peace.

## Outcomes and Recommendations

The seminar identified several key areas for potential GCC-MIKTA collaboration:

- Knowledge sharing: Establish platforms for sharing expertise on extremism, counterterrorism, and sustainable development, areas where both blocs face shared challenges.
- Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements: Explore opportunities for FTAs between GCC and individual MIKTA countries to strengthen economic ties.
- Development Initiatives: Joint training programs and academic partnerships focused on development cooperation and policy research can deepen connections and improve mutual understanding.
- “Mini-lateral” approaches: Small-scale partnerships can address specific challenges, such as food security and maritime safety, within a broader multilateral framework.
- Rules-based multilateral systems: Both GCC and MIKTA members reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based international order, which can help build resilience in trade and security.







The Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted a webinar titled "Saudi-Nordic Relations" on November 13, 2024. The panel of speakers included Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center; Prof. Saleh AlKhathlan, Senior Advisor at the Gulf Research Center; Amb. Jakob Hallgren, Ambassador and Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI); Prof. Jakub Godzimirski, Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI); Dr. John Sfakianakis, Director of Economic Research & Chief Economist at the Gulf Research Center; and Mr. Mohammed Hadi, Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA). Dr. Christian Koch, the Gulf Research Center Foundation Brussels Executive Manager and Director of Research at the Gulf Research Center, moderated the webinar.

The webinar focused on Saudi-Nordic relations, exploring developments and opportunities for collaboration. The discussion was part of a broader research program on GCC-NB8 relations. The meeting highlighted the importance of addressing regional conflicts and fostering sustainable economic and cultural partnerships. Participants expressed interest in further dialogue and collaboration to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.

## Political and Security Dimensions:

The webinar covered the current approach and efforts by the GCC states, particularly Saudi Arabia, in emphasizing the mediation of differences through negotiations, diplomacy, and dialogue, which has come to the forefront through the GCC Vision for Regional Security and the recent Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. Of the five Nordic countries, three have recognized the State of Palestine, including Iceland, the first Nordic country to recognize Palestine in 2011, followed by Sweden in 2014, and, most recently, Norway in 2024. The importance of Norway's position on Palestine was highlighted in the session, with the speakers arguing that the other Nordic countries should consider taking such a step as well. The speakers highlighted that finding peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East is at the top of Norway's political agenda and includes a high level of public support.

In terms of security, the speakers highlighted the importance of increasing efforts in strengthening maritime security and countering terrorism and extremism, given the expected rise following the instability in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Denmark currently plays a significant role in maritime security in the region. The speakers also emphasized that



Sweden and Finland both became members of NATO last year, leading to new and interesting avenues for collaboration with Saudi Arabia, especially in shared challenges such as terrorism and cybersecurity. There are also opportunities to ensure and strengthen defense collaboration.

### **Economic and Energy Relations:**

While economic relations between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries exist, the speakers concurred that there is untapped potential for substantial growth. Currently, there is limited trade between the two sides, but the technology and innovation sectors present promising opportunities. The Nordic sovereign wealth funds could play a pivotal role in promoting economic growth in Saudi Arabia by initiating investments in the Kingdom, especially given the strategic Vision 2030 program that aims to diversify the economy. The speakers delved into investment strategies and the potential for joint funds. Finland, in particular, identified Saudi Arabia as the most important export destination for Finnish products in the Gulf region.

One issue discussed was that while there is an investment flow going from the Nordic countries into Saudi Arabia, there is not so much going the other way, (from Saudi Arabia to the Nordic countries). In terms of trade, in 2023, the outflow is close to one-sixth of what the Nordic countries export to the Kingdom. As a result, and given the many projects being conducted in Saudi Arabia as part of Vision 2030, there exists much room for further enhancing economic ties related to the theme of trade and development. The innovation sector was identified as one area to focus on.

Energy also plays a crucial role in the relationship with collaboration in renewable energy and decarbonization efforts underlined. The speakers highlighted that recent years have witnessed the signing of many cooperation agreements and MoUs between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries on cooperation in the energy sector, seeking to increase cooperation in areas such as renewable energy, development of stable electricity systems, and various technologies and solutions to mitigate climate change such as carbon capture and sequestration.

### **Social and Cultural Aspects:**

One common issue identified in the session was the difference in public perception of the Gulf countries in the Nordic states and vice versa, as well as the negative perception of the Nordic population and media in terms of its relationships with countries beyond the West in general. This has had implications for the development of cooperation between the two regions. In response, the webinar addressed the importance of fostering people-to-people contact and educational ties as one effort to improve mutual perceptions. Sweden was cited as an example of educational cooperation through its Nord Plus program. Promoting tourism between the regions was also mentioned, given that there is a focus on both luxury and eco-tourism, with a projection of 800 million US dollars in revenue in the tourism sector for the GCC in 2024.

### **Key recommendations of the webinar included:**

- All Gulf speakers emphasized the need for Denmark and Finland to follow through on the recognition of Palestine as an independent state in the UN system. This recognition is seen as a crucial step towards promoting peace and stability in the region.
- Strengthening the role of the Nordic countries in promoting safer maritime security in the Red Sea and Gulf waters, given that freedom of navigation is crucial for both sides.
- Explore ways to further enhance cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries in combating terrorism and extremism. Additional efforts should also be made to increase collaboration on the humanitarian side.
- Increase dialogue and communication to manage the differences in perceptions between the two sides. Creating a dedicated research institution or research program on the relationship was suggested to expand networks and enhance Saudi-Nordic relations.
- Saudi Arabia should be added to the list of countries that can receive investments from the Nordic sovereign wealth funds to increase economic relations.
- One of the key steps towards enhancing economic relations is the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the GCC. This agreement could significantly boost economic relations between Saudi Arabia and the Nordic countries, providing a structured framework for trade and investment.





Organized by the

Gulf Research Center (GRC) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

November 12, 2024

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



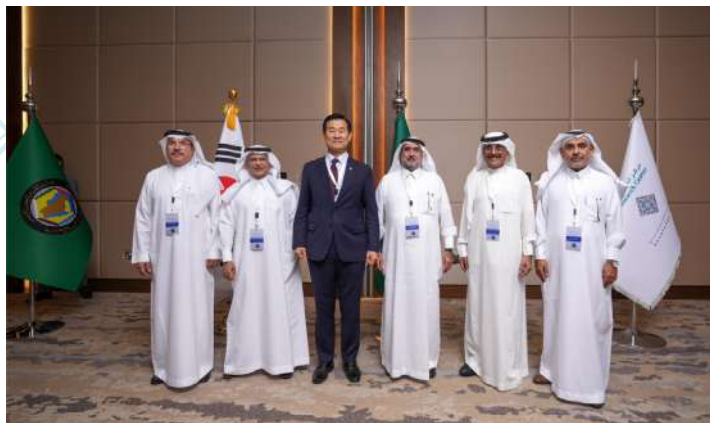
مركز الخليج للأبحاث  
Gulf Research Center

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Research Center (GRC) hosted the first 'Korea-GCC Cooperation Seminar' in Riyadh, marking a significant step toward strengthening ties between Korea and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This seminar gathered experts, policy officials, and academics from both regions, creating a platform to discuss current dynamics and potential avenues for deeper collaboration in key areas such as energy, security, defense, and economic growth. Discussions highlighted shared priorities, particularly developing a strategic partnership that includes enhanced cooperation in security and defense. With growing geopolitical complexities in the region, delegates acknowledged the importance of forging robust security alliances and exploring defense collaborations that address shared challenges and support regional stability. Energy cooperation also took center stage, with dialogues around renewable energy, nuclear energy, and Korea's advancements in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). The event also provided a space to discuss other regional issues, such as economic diversification and sustainable development goals.

Delegates from the **Gulf Cooperation Council**, the **Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning**, the **Ministry of Energy**, the **Ministry of Commerce**, the **Ministry of Investment**, the **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, and Gulf States embassies in Riyadh attended the seminar. Representatives from the **Shura Council**, **Riyadh Chamber of Commerce**, **Saudi Nuclear Energy Holding Company**, **Princess Nourah University**, and members of the Saudi-Korean Parliamentary Friendship Committee also participated. From the Korean side, delegates from KOTRA Riyadh, the Commercial Section of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, KIND - Korea-KSA Infrastructure Cooperation Center, and KOSME Korean SMEs and Startups Agency attended.

This multi-stakeholder presence underscored the seminar's role as a bridge between Korea and the Gulf states, fostering open dialogue and encouraging practical solutions to shared challenges. Through these discussions, both sides explored how they might deepen their partnerships to address global and regional issues, emphasizing the importance of economic resilience, energy security, and environmental sustainability as foundational elements of their cooperation.





**H.E. Choi Byung-Hyuk**, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and **Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), opened the session with welcoming remarks that underscored the strategic importance of Korea-GCC relations. Ambassador Choi reaffirmed Korea's commitment to fostering a stable and prosperous relationship with the Gulf states. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager emphasized the role of collaborative engagement in deepening mutual understanding and driving actionable policy frameworks, setting the stage for an era of closer cooperation on multiple fronts. Both sides expressed confidence that the seminar would lay the groundwork for expanded economic, political, and social partnerships between Korea and the GCC, particularly in security, defense, and sustainable development.

### **Session 1: Korea-GCC Relations: Navigating Current Dynamics and Future Opportunities**

**H.E. Dr. Abdel Aziz Hamad Aluwaisheg**, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Negotiations, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

**H.E. Albaraa Al-Iskandarani**, Deputy Minister of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Planning

**Dr. Lee Kwon-Hyung**, Head of the Middle East Team, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)

Chair: **Dr. Ali Al Qarni**, Head of Asia Unit, Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies (IDS)

The first session of the Korea-GCC Cooperation Seminar highlighted the Republic of Korea's economic growth trajectory and examined the current structure of GCC-Korea trade relations, where oil comprises a substantial 92% of GCC exports to Korea. Despite an impressive trade volume of \$50 billion, participants recognized that this figure falls short of the vast economic potential between the two regions, pointing to untapped opportunities in non-oil sectors. The session underscored the need for diversification, suggesting that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Korea and the GCC could be transformative. Such an agreement would not only bolster trade volume but could also promote more sustainable economic growth by fostering cross-border investments and shifting focus from merely trade in goods to creating long-term investment partnerships. By advancing the FTA, both sides could leverage complementary strengths to achieve higher levels of innovation, especially in technology, manufacturing, and services, creating new economic synergies.



*Panel Session 1: Korea-GCC Relations: Navigating Current Dynamics and Future Opportunities*

The seminar also addressed Korea's emerging role as a "middle power" with significant influence in regional security matters. Recognizing Korea's capabilities in this regard, participants discussed the potential for closer collaboration in humanitarian aid, emergency response, and political coordination to promote stability in the Gulf region. There were calls for strengthening military and defense ties, which could serve the dual purpose of supporting local defense industries and





enhancing the collective security framework within the Gulf. This cooperation could involve knowledge exchange, joint training exercises, and potentially co-developing defense technology tailored to regional needs. Participants agreed that sustained political engagement is essential to provide strategic depth and resilience to the Korea-GCC partnership. The session further emphasized people-to-people diplomacy, with recommendations to encourage tourism from Korea to GCC states as a means of building cultural understanding and reinforcing diplomatic relations.

The longstanding and rapidly evolving Korea-GCC relationship was highlighted as having substantial multi-sector strategic potential, particularly as both sides look to align government policies with private-sector initiatives. Korea's experience in technology-driven sectors and its competitive advantages in innovation and manufacturing make it a valuable partner for GCC countries seeking to diversify their economies beyond oil. Within the KSA/UAE-Korea trade corridor, there was a clear consensus on the importance of maximizing economic opportunities, especially in emerging sectors such as clean energy, digital infrastructure, and green technology. The session highlighted that by actively pursuing joint ventures and public-private partnerships, Korea and the GCC could not only enhance economic ties but also contribute to a more sustainable and diversified future for both regions.

## Session 2: Korean Energy Cooperation

**H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed AlSulaiman**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Tech Engineering Consultants, Former Vice President for Renewable Energy at KACARE

**Dr. Kang Han-Ok**, Vice President for SMART Development, Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI)

Chair: **Eng. Abdulaziz Al-Akeel**, Co-Founder of Value-Added Company (Edhafat) and Former Secretary General of Gulf Organizations of Industrial Consulting (GOIC)

The discussion in the second session delved deeply into the promising collaboration between Korea and Saudi Arabia in the field of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), an area poised for strategic impact. Panelists noted that SMRs, due to their compact size, scalability, and flexibility, are uniquely well-suited for environments like Saudi Arabia, where energy demands are rising, and sustainability is a national priority. Unlike traditional large reactors, SMRs can be deployed more quickly, cost-effectively, and with fewer resource requirements, making them an ideal solution for the Kingdom's diverse energy landscape.

There was a strong consensus that by focusing on joint development and implementation of SMR technology, both Korea and Saudi Arabia could not only meet immediate energy needs but also contribute to long-term energy security in the region. Participants highlighted the potential to leverage Saudi Arabia's vast landscape and resource capacity with Korea's advanced technological expertise to create high-impact SMR projects that could set a new standard for nuclear energy collaboration in the Middle East.



*Panel Session 2: Korean Energy Cooperation*

The session also highlighted the evolution of Korea-Saudi Arabia cooperation. While historically productive, the relationship has often been transactional, focused on specific projects rather than long-term strategic objectives. Moving forward, panelists underscored the importance of elevating this partnership from a transactional to a transformative alliance, focusing on sustainable economic growth as a shared priority.



The panelists acknowledged that by aligning their strategies and investments, both nations could foster an environment conducive to innovation, resilience, and shared growth. They proposed establishing joint research centers and pilot projects to test and refine SMR technology specifically for the environmental conditions of the Middle East. The session concluded with a strong call for Korea and Gulf states to institutionalize their partnership, creating a framework that would facilitate deeper strategic cooperation in SMRs and beyond, ultimately positioning the two nations as leading players in sustainable nuclear energy.

### **Session 3: Korea-GCC Dialogue on Regional Issues**

**Dr. Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center

**Prof. Dr. In Nam-Sik**, Director-General for Strategic Region Studies, Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Khathlan**, Senior Advisor at the GRC

The third and final session addressed the profound shifts in U.S. policies and the complex geopolitical landscape in Northeast Asia, with a concentrated focus on three major issues: the ongoing instability on the Korean Peninsula, rising regional tensions and threats in the Middle East, and the pressing need for more robust strategic alignment among allied and partner nations. Experts noted that the evolving security dynamics in Northeast Asia have significant implications for both Korea and Gulf nations, with instability on the Korean Peninsula potentially affecting regional stability and security globally. Broader tensions with influential players in Asia also present challenges that require both proactive and collaborative approaches to ensure regional resilience. As the Gulf states continue on their path towards greater diversification and security autonomy, they are increasingly open to strategic partnerships that reinforce their stability and address shared security threats, making Korea a valuable partner.



*Panel Session 3: Korea-GCC Dialogue on Regional Issues*

A key theme in the session was the need to enhance and conduct joint maritime security exercises to address common threats, especially as both Korea and the Gulf nations rely heavily on safe maritime routes for trade and energy transport. By developing joint response protocols, both sides can ensure they are prepared to counteract potential disruptions caused by piracy, territorial disputes, or regional conflicts that could impact maritime security.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the critical role of multilateral forums, such as the United Nations and other international bodies, as avenues for supporting each other's regional goals and interests. Strengthening defense industry collaboration was seen as mutually beneficial, allowing both Korea and Gulf nations to build resilience through shared defense technologies, joint manufacturing initiatives, and co-investment in defense R&D. This collaboration would provide Korea with a foothold in the Gulf's expanding defense market, while Gulf states would benefit from Korea's advanced technology and experience in areas like missile defense, cybersecurity, and military logistics.

The Gulf countries, driven by a desire for greater independence and a balanced international stance, are moving towards policies that enhance their self-reliance and neutrality. This approach is reflected in their foreign relations strategy, which increasingly seeks balanced partnerships that do not rely solely on traditional Western alliances.





Recognizing that maritime security is a pressing global issue—with Korea also deeply impacted by its maritime vulnerabilities—participants discussed the importance of moving beyond conventional trade arrangements to establish genuine strategic partnerships. This involves setting clear partnership objectives, including security, energy sustainability, and defense industry synergies, and defining mechanisms and channels to achieve these objectives. Participants agreed that establishing regular high-level dialogues, creating a framework for defense cooperation, and instituting working groups focused on specific security and defense areas would be instrumental in advancing Korea-Gulf cooperation, ultimately contributing to greater stability and prosperity in both regions.



## **Key Outcomes and Policy Recommendations**

### **Establishing a Strategic Framework Beyond Traditional Trade:**

- This seminar underscored the importance of moving beyond traditional, transactional trade relations between Korea and the GCC, focusing instead on forming strategic partnerships with long-term impact. To achieve this, it was recommended to clearly define what constitutes a “strategic partnership” between these regions.
- Establishing mechanisms and channels—such as dedicated liaison offices, regular policy dialogues, and bilateral councils—was highlighted as essential to ensure effective and sustained cooperation. By articulating shared objectives, Korea and the GCC can develop more cohesive policies that align their goals in areas like security, technology, and sustainable development.

### **Initiating Early Cooperation Ahead of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**

- While the activation of a Korea-GCC FTA will be significant, participants noted that there is a strong foundation for initiating cooperation immediately, rather than waiting for formal ratification. It is encouraged to act now, leveraging existing platforms and agreements to launch collaborative projects, share technology, and engage in joint research.
- This proactive approach would allow both regions to build momentum, foster trust, and demonstrate the tangible benefits of their partnership, thereby smoothing the path for a more comprehensive FTA when it comes into effect.

### **Facilitating Informal Expert Group Visits and Task-Oriented Meetings**

- A key recommendation was the creation of informal expert groups focused on priority areas such as energy, security, and advanced technology.
- These groups would comprise specialists and experts from Korea and the GCC, forming task groups to address specific challenges and opportunities. Informal, frequent exchanges between these experts—whether through visits, workshops, or virtual meetings—could help both regions identify mutual goals and develop actionable insights without the formality of state-level negotiations. This flexible approach would facilitate agile responses to emerging issues and promote innovative problem-solving.

### **Enhancing Engagement with the Private Sector**

- Both Korean and GCC participants emphasized the critical role of the private sector in driving economic growth and innovation.
- There was broad consensus on the need for structured engagement with private enterprises from both regions. It was recommended that future cooperation frameworks incorporate mechanisms for private-sector involvement, including public-private partnerships, investment incentives, and dedicated business councils. By fostering stronger ties between Korean and GCC businesses, the two regions can accelerate knowledge transfer, leverage capital and expertise, and support entrepreneurship and job creation across diverse sectors.



### GLMM

The Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population Programme (GLMM) is an international, independent, non-partisan, non-profit programme established in 2010 and is hosted and supported by the Gulf Research Center. The programme provides data, analyses, and recommendations contributing to the improvement of the understanding and management of Gulf labour migration, population, and labour markets, engaging with and respecting the viewpoints of all stakeholders. Visit the website [here](#).

### Data

For over a decade, GLMM has gathered, analyzed, and published official data related to labour and migration from multiple sources of all six GCC states. The database contains more than 1,000 tables.

### Country tables

Access Bahrain Data [here](#)

Access Kuwait Data [here](#)

Access Oman Data [here](#)

Access Qatar Data [here](#)

Access Saudi Arabia Data [here](#)

Access UAE Data [here](#)

### GCC regional tables

GLMM also constructs unique GCC regional tables based exclusively on the official country data. Access them [here](#).

### Publication

Sophia Kagan and Ryszard Cholewinski, "The regulation of platform work and labour hire companies for migrant workers in the Gulf Council Cooperation countries – a new challenge or an old problem?" [GLMM Explanatory Note No. 4/2024](#)

Access all GLMM publications [here](#).

### GLMM Project on the Future of Labor and Migration in Saudi Arabia

GLMM is implementing a project on "Vision 2030 and the Socio-Economic Reform Process: The Future of Labour and Migration in Saudi Arabia."

### The project has four objectives:

- Enhance understanding of the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics at all skill levels, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.
- Provide sound background information on the above, and policy advice for Saudi policymakers and economic actors, within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030.
- Foster a network of key Saudi experts, academics, and institutions, as well as international experts on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact.
- Create the conditions for continued research on the Saudi labour market, migration dynamics, and population policies and their impact on Saudi Arabia.

### The project focuses on:

- Saudi citizens' socio-economic characteristics and their possible future trends
- Future labour needs and migration in and to Saudi Arabia
- Challenges and opportunities created by the reforms
- Data for evidence-based policy making and enhanced knowledge

### The project has three phases:

- Highly skilled labour
- Saudi citizens
- Global challenges in the Saudi labour market

The first phase of the project is producing six research reports and six corresponding policy briefs. These will be presented by the authors in an in-presence meeting organized in Riyadh on December 1 and 2, with the participation of Saudi and international stakeholders.

### GRM 2025 GLMM Workshop on Highly Skilled Migrants in the GCC

GLMM will organize a workshop titled "Highly Skilled Migrants and the GCC Countries: Drivers, Perceptions, Policies, and New Dynamics" at the 15th Gulf Research Meeting which will be held in Cambridge (UK) from July 22-24 2025.

For a description of the workshop, [click here](#).

To apply for the workshop, [click here](#).

Contact: Mr. Imco Brouwer: [imco.brouwer@grc.net](mailto:imco.brouwer@grc.net)





### The Gulf Research Center (GRC) at COP 29



The Gulf Research Center Foundation, represented by Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and

Sustainability Research Program Director, participated in the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. GRC is a UNFCCC-accredited observer organization and participates in the daily coordination meetings of the Science and Technology Major Group.



United Nations  
Framework Convention on  
Climate Change

The Gulf Research Center held various bilateral talks and meetings at COP29 to discuss potential cooperation and the development of climate talks. Bilateral talks included countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Morocco, China, Azerbaijan, Germany, the UK, Oman, and Thailand, as well as international organizations such as the UNDP, the OPEC Fund, the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) as well as many private companies and civil societies organizations.



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf spoke on November 14, 2024, on the need of good international governance

for new emerging technologies of geoengineering for combating climate change at the Green Zone at COP 29 during a side event at the Azersun Pavilion co-organized by the German Federal Ministry Economic Affairs and Climate Change and the German Chambers of Commerce.



Dr. Raouf also participated in numerous official side events at various pavilions of countries and organizations on topics such as the new climate finance goal, the

circular economy, accelerating the transition to clean energies, the possibility of achieving zero carbon by 2050, green cities, and climate financing strategies. This also included events for the launching of national and international initiatives such as the National Green Projects Initiative of Egypt and the China International Initiative on International Zero Carbon Cooperation for Island Countries.



Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Environmental Security and Sustainability Research Program director at the Gulf Research Center participated in the monthly coordination telecall UNEP Major Groups Facilitation Committee. The meeting discussed the plan of engagement of major groups in the preparations for UNEA 7 and its associated meetings. GRC is currently the co-chair of MGFC at UNEP.

He also chaired the monthly coordination telecall of the SPP Scientist Alliance for Chemicals Waste and Pollution Protection on November 27, aiming to plan and coordinate the next practical steps for the official establishment of the alliance as well as the plan of activities in the next quarter, including participation at various events on chemicals.



مختبر الحوار الخليجي  
Gulf Dialogue Lab



GRC PODCAST  
بودكاست مركز الخليج للأبحاث

### Publications



**Local Cultural Identity as a Condition for Globalization: Gulf Countries Lead the Way**

November 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).

### GRC Podcast Activities

October 2, 2024

November 5, 2024

As part of the Quality of Life Lab episodes, the GRC Podcast presented a panel discussion titled: Using building materials free of radiation and harmful substances. The discussion was hosted by Eng. Hisham Ismail, a geological and environmental engineer, and moderated by Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program. Access the full episode [here](#).



**The Concept of Culture: Who is an intellectual?**

November 2024

Access the full paper [here](#).







### November 19, 2024

The Cultural and Media Program released the report of the second seminar of the Narrative Lab, which discussed an important cultural topic: Memory and Folklore Between Jordan and Saudi Arabia: Shared Narratives. The report reviews the most important outcomes and recommendations raised by the supervisor and participants during the symposium. To read the full report on the symposium, click [here](#). Access the full episode [here](#).

### November 25, 2024

The Gulf Dialogue Lab at the Gulf Research Center presented the first roundtable forum in cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which discussed the topic: The Islamic world and the question of a common identity with the participation of a group of speakers from various Arab-Islamic countries.





The Gulf Research Center produces various publications through its research programs, projects, and Gulf Research Meetings. The GRC's publications can be accessed on its website via [this link](#); the commentary and analyses can be found [here](#); and selected Arabic articles can be found [here](#).

## Commentary & Analyses



Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge For All

**Towards a Renewed Commitment: Regional Leadership, Transitioning U.S. Policy, and the Imperative for Resolving the Palestinian Issue**

Layla Ali\*  
November 2024



Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge For All

**A Disappointing COP 29**

Mohamed Abdelraouf  
November 2024



Gulf Research Center  
Knowledge For All

**GCC-US Relations, Regional Instability, and the Second Trump Administration**

Amnah Mosly  
November 2024



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**New Faces, Old Challenges: A Path Forward**

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**A Shift in Policy Towards Syria: How Far Should the EU Go?**

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**GCC-US Relations in Trump's Second Term: It's Not Necessarily All Bad News**

Prof. Saleh Al-Khatlan  
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Commentary & Analyses



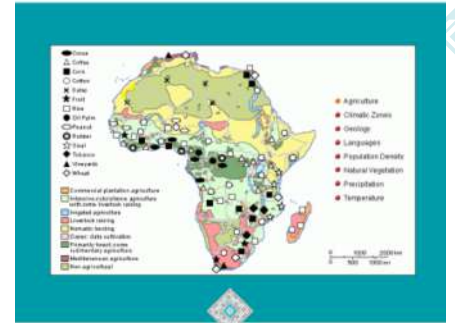
Strategic Energy Partnerships: The GCC and South Korea's Path to Energy Security

Noriko Suzuki\*  
November 2024



Partners in Defiance: Russia and Iran Move Closer to Alliance

Emil Avdaliani  
November 2024



Gulf Research Center  
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GCC-Africa Agriculture



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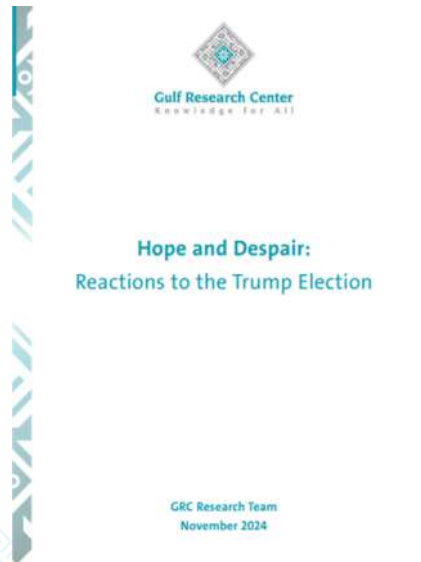
GCC-Africa Agriculture  
Gulf Research Center  
November 2024

GRC Reports



Saudi-Nordic Relations Webinar: Summary and Key Outcomes

Gulf Research Center  
November 2024



Hope and Despair: Reactions to the Trump Election

GRC Research Team  
November 2024

Araa



#203 (November 2024)  
Arab Maghreb Union Countries: Challenges and Catalysts

Saudi-Nordic Relations Webinar: Summary and Key Outcomes  
Gulf Research Center  
November 2024

Hope and Despair: Reactions to the Trump Election  
GRC Research Team  
November 2024



In November 2024, the GRC participated in numerous international events, both online and in-person, tackling issues pertaining to developments in the Gulf region and its broader neighborhood. The GRC emphasizes participating in such events, as it allows for the inclusion of a regional perspective in the debate. The following is an overview of the critical events in which the GRC participated this month.

## November 30, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) participated as a speaker in the first session entitled "The Positions of the Arab Gulf States on the Palestinian Issue" at the 11th Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Forum in its eleventh organized by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, and disused a working paper entitled: The Saudi Position the Israeli War on Gaza and Its Determinants

## November 27, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the 10th Rome MED Dialogue, organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies) in Rome on November 27, 2024. Dr. Sager participated as a speaker on a panel titled 'The Future of Iran-Gulf Relations'.

During the session, Dr. Sager underscored the necessity for a strategic shift in Iran's regional approach, contingent upon Tehran's willingness to embrace such changes. He emphasized that while initiating dialogue is a constructive move, substantial advancements will only occur when all involved parties are prepared to make mutual concessions.

## November 27, 2024

Layla Ali, Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated as a speaker at the 5th CARPO Research Forum and spoke in a session titled 'The Middle East and Central Asia'. Layla spoke about the evolving relations between Central Asia and the Gulf and both regions' opportunities for developing relations.

## November 22, 2024



Dr. Christian Koch, Executive Manager of the Gulf Research Center Foundation's (GRCF) Brussels office, recently met with a delegation of young Bahraini leaders from the 'Youth Pioneer' initiative. The visit, organized by the Bahraini Embassy in Brussels, facilitated meaningful engagement between the delegation and the GRCF team. The Bahraini leaders explored avenues for collaboration while also immersing themselves in the rich cultural offerings of the European Union, fostering a deeper understanding of EU institutions and culture.

## November 20, 2024

Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the GRC's Culture and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, received a delegation of students from the Department of Political Science at King Abdulaziz University at the GRC's office in Jeddah on Wednesday, November 20, 2024. During the meeting, they discussed ways and areas of joint cooperation in research activities, and the possibility of holding workshops and seminars in various fields.





**November 20, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and GRC's Senior Team received this morning at the GRC's office in Riyadh H.E. Balázs Selmecei, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Sándor Major, Deputy Head of Mission, Dr. N. Rózsa Erzsébet, and Dr. László Csicsmann. Many different thoughts and ideas were exchanged on regional and international issues during the visit.

**November 17, 2024**



Dr Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), participated in the Sir Bani Yas Forum from 15-17 November 2024, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

**November 13, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Guo Wanda, Executive Vice President of the Chinese Development Institute (CDI), along with his delegates, Mr. Yu Lingqu, Executive Director of the Department of Financial Development and Enterprise Research at the CDI, and Mr. Kris Liu, Director of International Cooperation Department at the CDI, at the GRC's office in Riyadh. Both sides discussed areas of cooperation in research activities between both institutions.

**November 13, 2024**



Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Dr. Tong Fai, Director of Division of Security Studies from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences at the GRC office in Riyadh, along with Mr. Liu Linzhi, Research Assistant, Division of Security Studies, and Mr. James Li, Board Chairman/Co-Founder of Starwin. During this meeting both sides discussed areas of cooperation between both centers in different research activities.

**November 13, 2024**



GRC signed an MoU with the Sasakawa Foundation and recently met with the grandson of its founder. He is the founder and chairman of the Sasakawa Economic Foundation, and discussions were held regarding potential collaboration.

**November 11, 2024**



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), attended a luncheon hosted by HE Mr. Carlo Baldocci, the Ambassador of Italy to Saudi Arabia, at his residence. The lunch



honored the visit of HE Mr Alessio Nardi, Advisor to the Minister for Security Policies and Justice, Cooperation, and Development at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as Mr. Maurizio Greganti, Minister Plenipotentiary and Principal Director for the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Gulf countries.

The discussion centered on current regional developments and explored pathways for closer collaboration between Italian think tanks and those in the Gulf region to enhance Gulf-Italian relations.

### November 11, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Mr. Fawaz AlTayeb, Board Director of the Noon Center for Strategic Studies and Dialogue (NASS) in Mosul, Iraq at the GRC office in Riyadh. The meeting focused on exploring areas of cooperation and shared interests in research activities.

### November 8, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), took part in a closed panel discussion hosted by the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies in Riyadh. The discussion included Saudi specialists and a delegation from the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The session explored Saudi-Iranian relations and other areas of cooperation.

### November 6, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC) and member of the World Law Foundation (WLF) Board of Trustees, participated in the WLF's Board of Trustees Meeting virtually on November 6, 2024. The meeting involved discussions about the WLF activities and action plan for 2025.

### November 5, 2024



Noriko Suzuki, Senior advisor at the GRC, met with HE Mr. Hasan Mohamed Zamanan, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Japan to discuss research cooperation.

### November 4, 2024



Noriko Suzuki, Senior Advisor at the GRC, met with HE Ambassador Binzagr, Saudi Ambassador to Japan, and the Head of Public Policy at Netflix to discuss potential collaboration for EXPO 2025. Netflix has been actively collaborating with the Governor of Tokyo to promote Tokyo as the world's leading capital city.





## November 3, 2024



The award was received by Dr. Ahmed Sager, Vice President of GRC, on behalf of Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, who expressed his appreciation for this honor and affirmed GRC's commitment to advancing collaborative research efforts in other institutions in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries.

## November 3, 2024



Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), met with Iraqi Consul General Mr. Mohammed Samir Al-Naqshbandi at the GRC's office in Jeddah. The meeting focused on enhancing research collaboration between the GRC and Iraqi research institutions, with both sides planning a series of workshops to strengthen ties between the GRC and Iraqi think tanks.



At a ceremony held at the Cultural Palace, Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan, HE Mr. Madiyar Menilbekov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, presented a certificate of appreciation and a commemorative gift from the Kazakh Embassy to the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in recognition of its efforts in developing relations between Central Asian countries and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.



GRC media participation can be accessed [here](#), at the GRC official YouTube channel.



On November 1, 2024, the Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, was featured on Al-Sharq TV's (Bloomberg) program "On the Borders" to discuss "The Riyadh Meeting and the Global Alliance Roadmap for the Two-State Solution."

Watch the full interview here: [https://youtu.be/Hgmy6asxz\\_Q](https://youtu.be/Hgmy6asxz_Q)



Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf, later appeared on Algeria International Channel to discuss the outcomes of the Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh. The interview can be viewed on the following link: [https://youtu.be/AvCQND\\_bZ0A?si=ljc68xmYNICZ9JLa](https://youtu.be/AvCQND_bZ0A?si=ljc68xmYNICZ9JLa)



On November 12, Dr. Abderrezzaq Gherraf, Senior Researcher at the Gulf Research Center, participated in an interview on Al-Wataniya channel to comment on the Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh. The interview can be accessed on the following link: <https://youtu.be/b1W4F30fGI0?si=6Ro0eBHxeF9h31RG>



On November 12, 2024 Dr. Zaid Alfadeil, Director of the Cultural and Media Program at the Gulf Research Center, appeared on Today's Program on Al-Ekhbariya News Channel to discuss "The Riyadh Summit: A Unified Position to Stop Israeli Aggression." The interview can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/73VhyZV56Uk>





GRC media participation can be accessed [here](#), at the GRC official YouTube channel.



On November 13, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center and Crisis Group trustee, participated in a Crisis Group video discussing Saudi Arabia's stance on the regional escalation in the Middle East. Watch the video on X: <https://x.com/CrisisGroup/status/1856698535271342543>



On November 14, 2024, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, participated in the "Arab Talks" podcast with Nour Jloud on Al-Jadeed Lebanese channel to discuss "The Decisions of the Extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh." You can access the interview on the following link:

<https://youtu.be/88M6cnXcbwk>



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