



Roundtable on Scaling Renewable Energy in Europe and the MENA-Region

6th November 2025 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Background

On 6 November 2025, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa (SDI), in partnership with the Swedish Embassy in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), held a roundtable discussion on Scaling Renewable Energy in the Euro-MENA Region. The event brought together some 20 interlocutors from Sweden, the EU and the MENA-region for facilitated discussions in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The roundtable was the outcome of an earlier visit conducted by SDI in March 2025 and was convened as part of SDI's mission to promote dialogue and cooperation between Europe and the MENA region on issues of mutual interest, including on climate change and the green transition. The aim of the roundtable was to link needs with opportunities to scale renewable energy in Europe and the MENA region, establish relations between entrepreneurs and innovators working in renewable energy, and contribute to policy discussions on aligning government priorities with private sector needs to accelerate the green transition.

Opening & Panel Discussion

The welcoming remarks by the organisers emphasised the shared responsibility of Europe and the MENA region in addressing the green transition and upholding commitments to climate neutrality. Amidst international challenges to fulfilling climate goals, regional collaboration became even more vital.

A panel discussion followed with a diverse group of experts and entrepreneurs, including Dr Anwar Al-Anzi, researcher and entrepreneur specialising in solar energy technologies; Kristjan Jordanov, founder of Net Zero Build; Jessica Obaid, energy policy and governance expert; and Salma Haddad, Programme Director at Flat6Labs. Facilitated by Mattias Goldmann, the panel brought a range of insights.

Dr. Al-Anzi presented innovations in solar panel design and local material development, underscoring Saudi Arabia's growing capacity for indigenous research and manufacturing. Jordanov described his company's relocation from Sweden to Saudi Arabia driven by Vision 2030 and increasing demand for sustainable building certification. Obaid highlighted that while technological



advancement is vital, the success of renewable energy transitions depended equally on political stability, access to finance, and coherent policy frameworks.

Haddad discussed support for startups and SMEs in their green transition and noted a communication gap between financial institutions and small businesses in accessing green loans. The discussion stressed the importance of both policy frameworks and market mechanisms that make renewable energy investments attractive, scalable, and locally relevant. The conversation centred on how dialogue, policy innovation, and cross-sector collaboration could accelerate the transition to renewable energy and contribute to climate-neutrality goals. Participants explored key themes including scaling renewable technologies, aligning public and private sector priorities, and identifying opportunities for Euro-MENA cooperation.

The discussion highlighted the importance of integrated approaches that link technological innovation, policy frameworks, and financing mechanisms, and underscored the role of partnerships between entrepreneurs, governments, and investors. It concluded with a commitment to further cooperation and a shared recognition that the MENA region had the potential to become a global leader in renewable energy innovation.

Break-out Discussions

Discussions continued in break-out format where participants amongst other issues, highlighted examples of effective policy mechanisms for scaling up, such as Egypt's feed-in tariff system, Sweden's "fossil free Sweden" initiative linking various sectors to remove obstacles to the transition, the importance of participatory and transparent policymaking, and the need for regulatory clarity to attract investment.

Overall, renewable energy had to become investment attractive and "bankable". Participants further spoke of financing challenges access across Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, and Sweden, stressing the role of innovation ecosystems and the need for consistent government support for scaling renewable startups. Financial stability was a prerequisite to advance on this front. Moreover, participants explored the link between renewable energy and sustainable development, highlighting that global growth depended on innovation.

It was advised that policymakers stressed the correlation between renewable energy and development by illustrating how it could bring about higher life standards. Saudi Arabia's potential to serve as a regional hub for renewable energy



leadership was further mentioned in this context given its significant investments and strategic vision.

Conclusions & Next Steps

The roundtable underscored the value of structured dialogue and the exchange of perspectives from Europe and the MENA region on the green transition. Participants reaffirmed the need for collaborative approaches that aligned innovation, policy, and finance to meet climate goals.

For this reason, both policymakers, the private sector and academia had to convene on climate issues. The overall tone of the discussions reflected optimism about the potential of the Euro-MENA partnership to lead global renewable energy progress. As one closing reflection noted, there is no reason why the MENA region should not become a global powerhouse for sustainable energy.