

**Learning Event on Developing Knowledge Economy Strategies to Improve
Competitiveness in the Middle East and North Africa Region
Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt, 17-21 May 2009**

The World Bank Institute's Knowledge for Development (K4D) Program, in collaboration with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region of the World Bank, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Egyptian National Competitiveness Council, the Economic Research Forum, and the Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management, is organizing a learning event on "Developing Knowledge Economy Strategies to Improve Competitiveness in the Middle East and North Africa Region" that will take place 17-21 May 2009, at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt.

The main objective of the learning event is to provide a platform for a wide range of stakeholders from government, private sector, and civil society to discuss how countries can leverage their potential to further compete in the global knowledge economy. As such, the program will focus on policy strategies, case studies, exchange of experiences, as well as analytical tools that can help countries benchmark progress on the knowledge economy. The event is designed for a small number of participants (about 70) from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia.

Face-to-face learning event will be designed around 4 main themes:

- Day 1 will focus on **visions and strategies for building Knowledge Economies (KEs)**, including a key presentation by a leading specialist, a high level panel policy focused discussion of what it takes to build KEs as well as presentations from participating country team on their on-going strategic initiatives to harness knowledge for development. This kind of action learning approach will also help to focus them throughout the duration of the course.
- Day 2 will focus on **KE implementation strategies and methods and the critical role played by education and skills in the KE**. The morning session will focus on KE implementation methods; creating an ideal platform, at national level, for integrated fast-tracked Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE) efforts. The second half of the day will focus on education and skills—this would emphasize the need not only for high quality and relevant primary, secondary and tertiary education, but also stress the importance of nurturing "soft" skills such as problem-solving and analytical skills, the ability to work with others in a team-based environment, communication skills, as well as ICT skills across education levels.
- Day 3 will focus on a discussion of the **importance for countries to promote private sector development and invest in innovation**, including the need for creating an enabling environment that encourages all actors in the innovation system—firms, research centers, universities, think tanks, consultants and other organizations—to tap into the growing stock of global knowledge, assimilate and adapt it to local needs and create new technology.

- Day 4 will look at the **overall KE agenda and sum up from the action plans presented by the participating country teams**. Each country should develop a concrete summary of ideas on how they could forward the particular KE-related theme that they worked on during the course in their countries, and perhaps identify areas where K4D/the Bank could be of possible assistance. The course will end with an evaluation of the course—what worked, and what did not work.