

Strategic Plan (2023 – 2028)

Promoting scientific excellence, inquiry and dialogue
in the Arab World.

Core Report

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Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028

Promoting scientific excellence, inquiry and dialogue in the Arab World

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Strategic Context

Economic inequality across many Arab countries is preventing millions from accessing scientific research and knowledge. This is fuelling intellectual disparities between the Arab and developed Worlds, and affecting human life and welfare in this and future generations. Sustained and structured provision of scientific knowledge and nourishment of scientific intellect across the Arab World is becoming a fundamental and pressing need. The Royal Society, Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina, College de France, and many others are successful, well-established societies that promoted scientific excellence and intellectual curiosity over decades, and contributed to the economic growth and social welfare of their countries of origin. Forums as such do not exist in the Arab World. Aspiring to an intellectual Arab World, **saf** envisions to promote scientific excellence, inquiry and dialogue in the Arab World, to promote its researchers to global leadership in science, aspire curiosity and inform policy.

Priorities

Based on this vision, our focus areas for the next 5 years are:

- Membership excellence.
- Science communication.

Membership Excellence

Members are the core of The Forum. Excellence of the body of members is a fundamental prerequisite to:

- Promoting scientific intellect, rigor and curiosity.
- Developing strong partnerships with industry, business and non-profits.
- Effecting tangible, sustained, long-term and high-impact societal change.

Commitments

To promote scientific excellence, The Forum will:

- Appoint up to 20 new members yearly. Membership of The Forum is only secured through nominations by the chief scientific officers thereof. Members are early career researchers (i.e., research fellows/scientists/engineers, junior group leaders and assistant professors) with an exceptional track record of publications, awards, leadership and services to the academic community. Members are recommended irrespective of their beliefs, ethnicity, nationality (subject to being of Arab origin), gender, area of expertise and affiliation. Members are appointed for life and are expected to promote the vision of The Forum through participation in the lectures, conferences and meetings thereof (see **Science Communication**).
- Appoint a number of yearly associates (exact figure is to be determined by the chief strategy officer of The Forum). Associateship of the Forum is by application thereto. Associates are young researchers (i.e., masters and pre-doctoral students) with a demonstrated talent and interest in the vision and activities of The Forum. Associates are the dynamic workforce of The Forum and are expected to contribute to one or more of the activities of The Forum.
- Design and execute a Development, Mentorship and Leadership Programme for the members and associates of The Forum. The programme will be designed by the Chief Development Officers of The Forum in partnership with professional coaches.

Track Record

The Forum has a strong track record of recruiting exceptional early career researchers to its membership, including (but not limited to):

- Dr Mohamed Elbrolosy (Arabic: محمد البرلسي; Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, Forbes 30 under 30 and Otto Hahn medal awardee).
- Dr Elham Fadaly (Arabic: إلهام فضالي; Physics World 2020 Breakthrough of the Year).
- Dr Martine Abboud (Arabic: مارتين عبود; Junior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford and Forbes 30 under 30).
- Dr Sara Ahmed (Arabic: ساره أحمد; Richtzenhain Doctoral Prize Awardees).

Resources Acquired

- More than 100 members admitted to The Forum.
- A high-quality website dedicated to promoting the members and products (see **Science Communication**) of the Forum.
- A dedicated social media webpage to advertise and promote events of the Forum (see **Science Communication**).

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Resources Required

To achieve the above objectives. The Forum requires:

- An administrative assistant to receive recommendations for new members, to promote yearly calls and to assist with the induction paperwork. This resource will be acquired on a pro rata basis and on the availability of low levels of additional funds.

Science Communication

Science communication is:

- A responsibility towards society.
- Key to raising communal intellect.
- Ensures that efforts to promote scientific excellence are sustained, and that the recruitment of future members and the promotion of Arab researchers to global leadership in science are guaranteed through a growing group of individuals whose scientific curiosity and knowledge are successfully nurtured by the Forum in the next decade.

Commitments

To develop a science communication programme that promotes the above vision and targets different societal groups of strategic interest, The Forum devised a three-tier plan based on the age and comprehension tools of each group. In this programme, The Forum will:

- Communicate research to Arab young adults attending University (see Tier 1).
- Communicate research to Arab youth attending school (see Tier 2).
- Communicate research to children (see Tiers 2 and 3).
- Communicate research to Arab children, youth and adults (see Tier 3).

Track Record

The Forum has successfully delivered (and continues to deliver) short scientific articles aimed at Arab adults post-graduation. The articles, written in Arabic, are sourced from reputable, peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Nature, Science, Cell, etc.), and recommended to the editorial team by the expert members of the Forum.

Resources Acquired

The Forum has acquired the following resources:

- An editorial team experienced in scientific writing.
- Long-term branding, publishing and promotional strategies.

Resources Required

The Forum requires:

- An expanded editorial team experienced in scientific writing to cover a wide range of sub-disciplines in the life, physical and social sciences.
- A development and training program to ensure the sustained operation and intellectual growth of the editorial team.

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Tier 1

In this tier, The Forum will deliver scientific conferences, lectures and interviews, aimed at motivating university students to undertake a career in scientific research, and updating young researchers with the latest scientific research:

- For the scientific conferences, The Forum's chief scientific officers in the physical, life and social sciences will organise yearly virtual conferences where the members of The Forum are invited to deliver short talks about their current research.
- For the scientific lectures, The Forum's chief scientific officers in the physical, life and social sciences will organise a yearly schedule for long, monthly lectures delivered in English (and republished with Arabic translation) by established researchers affiliated with world-class Universities and research institutes who are invited by the members of The Forum.
- For the scientific interviews, members of The Forum will be interviewed bi-weekly to expose their research careers and future aspirations.

All conferences, lectures and interviews will be free to attend, can be registered for by students and researchers affiliated to Arab Universities and research institutes (subject to the availability of places), and will be available to watch online (subject to the approval of presenters) for wider reach. revenues accrued from viewership will be used to financially sustain the team producing these products (see **Resources Required**).

Resources Required

To achieve the objectives of tier 1, The Forum requires:

- An administrative assistant to liaise between the chief scientific officers, internal speakers (i.e., members) and external speakers. This resource will be acquired on a pro rata basis and the on availability of low levels of additional funds.
- An interviewer to interview the members of the forum. This resource will be acquired on a pro rata basis and on the availability of low levels of additional funds.
- A video editor (and access to a video editing tool) to produce quality branded videos of the interviews with the members of The Forum. The resource will be acquired on a pro rata / subscription / one-off payment basis and on the availability of low levels of additional funds.

Tier 2

- In this tier, The Forum will deliver scientific Lessons to simplify complex scientific concepts and motivate school students to undertake a career in scientific research. Lessons will be delivered in short animated videos of exceptional quality. The members and editorial team of The Forum will develop the curricula for these lessons. Lessons will be free to watch and revenues accrued from viewership will be used to financially sustain the team producing and delivering this product (see **Resources Required**).

Resources Required

To achieve the objectives of tier 2, The Forum requires:

- A team of at least one illustrator / animator, one video producer and one voice artist (or access to a team as such) to produce these lessons in an animated form. This resource will be acquired on a pro rata / full-time basis and in partnership with an organisation possessing this resource.

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Tier 3 (Follow-up Tier)

In this tier, we will deliver scientific books to target all children, youth and adults, and ensure sustained knowledge delivery. The members and editorial team of The Forum will develop the curricula of these books through careful, long-term strategic planning. Our books will be delivered against a small fee to cover labour and publications costs.

Resources Required

To achieve the objectives of tier 3, The Forum requires:

- Access to a publishing facility to publish the books designed, written, proof-read and edited by The Forum. This resource will be acquired through partnership with an organisation possessing this resource.