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The Role of the Digital Economy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab Region (Descriptive Analytical Study)

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Abstract: This study aims to reveal the reality of the digital economy in the Arab region according to five basic dimensions, which are represented in the digital foundations, digital innovation, digital government, digital citizen, digital business, and the extent of its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The comparative and statistical method was employed to identify the differences and imbalances within the Arab region according to the digital economy indicators. The results of this study reflect the outputs of the impact of digital transformation on the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region through education, well-being, gender equality, achieving justice and equality, innovation, and establishing transparency and accountability.

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Keywords:

Digital economy, sustainable development goals, Arab region, digital indicators.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become inevitable for all countries by adopting effective strategies, foundations and public policies to transform towards the digital economy, which has become a basic feature and characteristic that advanced and developed countries care about. The Arab region has also not been spared from this transformation, in which some countries in this region have been able to occupy significant positions within the classification of the global digital economy in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development and promising countries towards the digital economy, while we find countries that are still stagnant compared to some other Arab countries.

Perhaps the objectives of this study lie in revealing the reality of the digital economy in this Arab region and classifying it locally and abroad, and also identifying the challenges facing this region within the framework of the ability of the Arab digital economy to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

The importance of this study lies in standing on the role that the digital economy and digital technology have come to play in driving the wheel of development and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in these countries and the most important indicators that these countries have reached.

On this basis, the formulation of the problem came as follows:

To what extent can the digital economy contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development in the Arab region?

Within this main problem, a set of secondary questions branch out, the most important of which are the following:

- What is the concept of the digital economy? What are the goals of sustainable development?

- What are the basic dimensions of the digital economy in the Arab region?

- What is the impact of information and communications technology on the goals of sustainable development in the Arab region?

Through these questions, a realistic hypothesis was adopted, which came as follows:

- Deepening the digital economy contributes to raising the indicators of sustainable development.

To verify the hypothesis, some approaches and methods were used according to the nature of the topic's axes, including:

- The descriptive and analytical approach to present the reality of the digital economy in the Arab region, with reference to the goals of sustainable development within the framework

of the Arab digital transformation and determining the ranks of these countries according to the five dimensions of the digital economy. - While the quantitative statistical approach

was used by addressing the most important statistics related to the digital transformation according to the indicators of the Arab digital economy.

The comparative approach was also used to identify the imbalances and disparities within the Arab region, especially since some countries are leading the Arab scene, which fall within the first group, and other promising countries, while the countries of the third group are at the bottom of this ranking with a large digital gap.

Chapter I: The conceptual framework of the digital economy and sustainable development

There are many concepts about the digital economy and sustainable development, and these concepts can be summarized as follows:

1- The concept of the digital economy:

It is the economy that is based on the Internet and digital information and data, through dealing with customers, business institutions and digital government institutions in order to achieve transparency for all economic, commercial and financial indicators in the country. (1)

It is a combination of a set of technologies designed for common use and a set of economic and social activities performed by individuals through the Internet and related technologies through the physical infrastructure behind digital technologies (broadband, routers), the devices used (mobile phones, computers and tablets), and the applications and

[1] - Research and Information Center, Digital Economy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Reality and Challenges), Riyadh Chamber, Saudi Arabia, 2022, p. 01.

functions they provide (such as data analysis and cloud services). (2)

It is also known as : the economy of digital technology which is based on a set of components like infrastructure and digital services and digital mechanisms that are carried out through commercial and economic business through commercial and economic businesses.
Such as e-commerce and digital transactions through the Internet, and the digital economy can also be called the Internet economy, the web, or the new economy. (3)

2- Dimensions of the digital economy:

It includes five basic dimensions, according to the Arab vision of the digital economy:

Digital government: This dimension represents the improvement and provision of public services to citizens and members of society and raising the level of efficiency and transparency within government institutions.

Digital foundations: This dimension includes a set of foundations such as digital infrastructure, digital skills, policies and regulations, financing, in addition to the government, as

[2] - Mária Sabayová, Karolína Červená ,**Challenges of digital economy**, Financial Law Review, Challenges of digital economy , Published: October 23rd, 2023, Slovakia, p73

[3] - Technology for Development Committee, Digital Economy and the Transformation towards Smart Societies in the Arab Region, United Nations, ESCWA, Dubai, 2017 , p5

these foundations contribute to upgrading the digital system at the international, regional and local levels.

Digital readiness for the citizen: The necessity of making this citizen the main focus of the digital transformation process by providing an appropriate digital environment that works to improve the quality of life of the citizen, civil society, marginalized groups, minorities, and gender equality.

Digital innovation: This dimension represents the creation of new digital technology based on artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and providing new sources aimed at creating added value for many industries.

Digital business: This dimension is based on the private sector and businesses and the extent of its contribution to providing quality service to the customer, improving cost efficiency, and searching for new markets.

These five dimensions are one of the main pillars of the digital economy through smooth digital transformation to achieve sustainable development goals, upgrade responsive capabilities to citizens' needs and requirements, and adapt to the digital transformation process and future.

3- Characteristics of the digital economy:

- Provides new job opportunities
- Increases productivity by reducing transaction costs.
- Facilitates communication and social integration.
- Creates added value through optimal exploitation of available resources.
- Makes the individual the focus of the development process.

- Relies on innovation as a key factor in developing new products[4]

4- The relationship between the digital economy and sustainable development goals.

The sustainable development goals include 17 sustainable development goals according to Vision 2030, and this relationship lies in the extent to which information and communications technology can achieve sustainable development goals and endeavors.[5]

Table (01) : shows the role of information and communications technology in achieving the sustainable development goals according to Vision 2030.

	The role of information and communication technology in achieving the sustainable development goals	Sustainable Development Goals
1	Access to digital services and participation in the digital economy has become one of the main pillars for eliminating poverty and empowering individuals with economic resources.	**No Poverty**

[4] - Arab Economic Unity Council **ECOWAS Digital Economy Blueprint: Towards a sustainable, inclusive, digitally enabled region**, United Arab Emirates,2020, First Edition – 2020, p17.

[5] - Arab Digital Union, Arab Vision for Digital Economy, Media Regulatory Office, United Arab Emirates, Third Edition, 2023, pp. 80-87.

2	Information and communication technology has played an important role in eliminating poverty by accessing the latest technologies for agriculture, fortifying the quality of agricultural crops and increasing their capacity through digital technology.	**Zero Hunger**
3	This aspect includes how to improve the lives of individuals by receiving information and medical advice remotely, using appropriate health services and health care, and following appropriate treatment protocols through digital services.	**Good Health and Well-Being**
4	This is represented by adopting digital and electronic innovations and new cognitive methods for the educational process and eliminating the differences between urban and rural areas.	**Quality Education**
5	This principle falls within the empowerment process to eliminate the digital gender gap, and enable all individuals to access the Internet and benefit as much as possible from information and communication technology.	**Gender Equality**
6	Digital technology can improve the lives of all individuals by providing them with clean water and sanitation	**Clean Water and Sanitation**

	through smart water management and continuous monitoring of water supplies.	
7	Digital transformation plays an important role in preserving energy and not wasting it by contributing to reducing carbon emissions and moving towards alternative and renewable energies and relying on data and smart technologies.	**Affordable and Clean Energy**
8	The digital economy contributes to the crystallization of entrepreneurial thinking and leading emerging institutions in digital technology by changing the methods and patterns of work and creating new job opportunities.	**Decent Work and Economic Growth**
9	It is one of the most important means and technologies that help achieve the goals of sustainable development through the continuity of the digital transformation process and moving towards the digital economy and the data economy.	**Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
10	Working to ensure that all members of society have access to information and	**Reducing Inequalities**

	communications technology to include all special categories, women and girls	
11	Information and communications technology has become one of the basic pillars for managing urban cities by providing a digital infrastructure for transportation and housing, rationalizing energy consumption and managing waste.	**Sustainable Cities and Communities**
12	Relying on information and communications technology means rational management of the consumption process and at the same time using this technology at a lower cost to manage the process of adoption and consumption.	**Responsible Consumption and Production**
13	Information and communications technology enables monitoring climate change and weather conditions through forecasting and early prediction systems	**Climate Action**
14	Information and communications technology helps preserve the ecosystems of seas and oceans and enables us to know and monitor these systems and maintain their sustainability.	**Life Below Water**
15	The use of ICT means preserving biodiversity and working on the sustainability of wildlife through the	**Life on Land**

	real-time and continuous monitoring provided by digital technology.	
16	ICT provides transparency, accountability and real-time in dealing with emergency crises, allowing appropriate measures to be taken to manage them.	**Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**
17	ICT technologies play an important role by accelerating the implementation of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. It is considered one of the executive means to achieve the goals of sustainable development.	**Special Businesses for the Goals**

Source : Arab Digital Union 2023 (6)

Chapter II: The status of the Arab digital economy according to the world map

The Arab region occupies varying ranks in terms of the global digital economy, and this is due to a number of reasons, perhaps the most important of which lies in each country's strategy towards the digital transformation process.

1- Classification of Arab countries according to the Arab Digital Economy Index for 2022

[6] - Arab Digital Union, Arab Vision for Digital Economy, Media Regulatory Office, United Arab Emirates, Third Edition, 2023, pp. 80-87.

This classification for the Arab region includes three groups according to their ability to respond to digital transformation and the extent of their ability to achieve the dimensions of the digital economy according to the (EGDI-GEMS) indices. These groups came as follows: [7]

The first group: It is called the leading countries that attract international investment and its results can be compared with advanced countries in the digital field. These countries include (the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait). These countries have the ability to adapt and be flexible in the speed of transformation towards smart cities, smart applications, and digitization of all government services.

The second group: These countries are classified among the digitally promising countries, as they are characterized by having sufficient infrastructure and knowledge to launch towards digital transformation, but they face a set of challenges such as digital services for all citizens, digital linking work, and deepening the use of digital identity. These countries include (Jordan, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon). The third group: These are the countries that need more investments in order to raise the capabilities of their digital infrastructure, which are: (Iraq, Syria, Mauritania, Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti, Palestine, Comoros, Libya, Somalia). This group needs different levels to complete its basic infrastructure for communications,

[7] - Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Economic Index 2022 Post-Covid-19 Phase and Prospects for Arab Economic Recovery and Growth, Media Regulatory Office, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, pp. 28-29.

Internet access, cybersecurity, and strategic plans for the transition towards a digital economy.

2- Ranking of Arab countries according to the value of the overall index 2022-EGDI

The Digital Government Development Index (EGDI) helps evaluate the development of digital government in the Arab region. It is a tool and a basic pillar for measuring the level of infrastructure TH, human capital HCI, and the electronic services index OSI. This index is a real measure of the readiness of government institutions, civil society representatives, and the business sector to use information and communications technology and make the individual the main focus of the development process.[8]

Table (02): Shows the ranking of Arab countries according to the value of the overall index 2022-EGDI

Arab Countries	Arrangement
United Arab Emirates	13
Saudi Arabia	31
Oman	50
Bahrain	54
Kuwait	61
Qatar	78
Tunisia	88

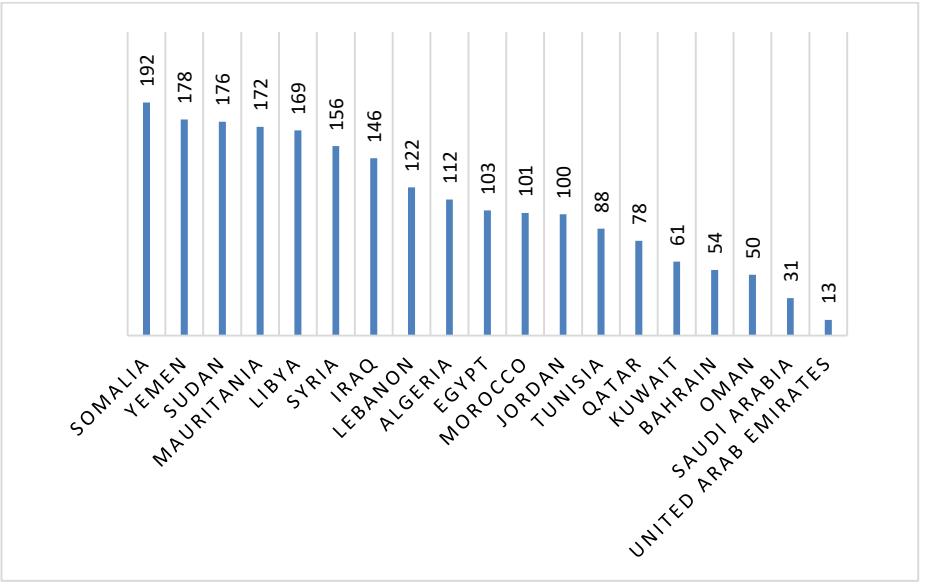
[8] - Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Economic Index 2022 Post-Covid-19 Phase and Prospects for Arab Economic Recovery and Growth, Media Regulatory Office, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, p137.

Jordan	100
Morocco	101
Egypt	103
Algeria	112
Lebanon	122
Iraq	146
Syria	156
Libya	169
Mauritania	172
Sudan	176
Yemen	178
Somalia	192

Source : ESCWA 2022 (9)

Figure (01) : Shows the ranking of Arab countries according to the value of the overall index 2022-EGDI

9 - ESCWA, Digital Transformation in the Arab Region and ESCWA Efforts to Support its Acceleration, Seventh Special Session, Oman, December 2022, p. 6.



Source : ESCWA 2022 [10]

3- Comparing the Arab digital economy with Malaysia and Singapore:

Singapore and Malaysia have become among the world's leading countries in the field of digital economy, due to their adoption of sound digital strategies and policies.

Singapore launched the Smart Nation initiative, which is a strategic roadmap for digital transformation in the country, through a set of measures represented in: harnessing modern technology such as smart mobile phone services, working to

10 - ESCWA, Digital Transformation in the Arab Region and ESCWA Efforts to Support its Acceleration, Seventh Special Session, Oman, December 2022, p. 6.

establish the national digital identity, and accelerating the digitization process in the fields of business, industries, and commercial activities.

As for Malaysia, it has also developed an ambitious strategy that includes providing an appropriate digital technology environment such as enhancing digital services, enhancing capabilities and competencies by re-engineering digital technology skills, and generalizing information and communications technology in all sectors and comparing it with international best practices to identify weaknesses and shortcomings

Table (03) :Benchmark comparison of Malaysia and Singapore in the Arab region

Benchmark index value for Malaysia and Singapore (benchmark)	75.97
Negative gap	31.67
Average index value for the Arab region	44.30

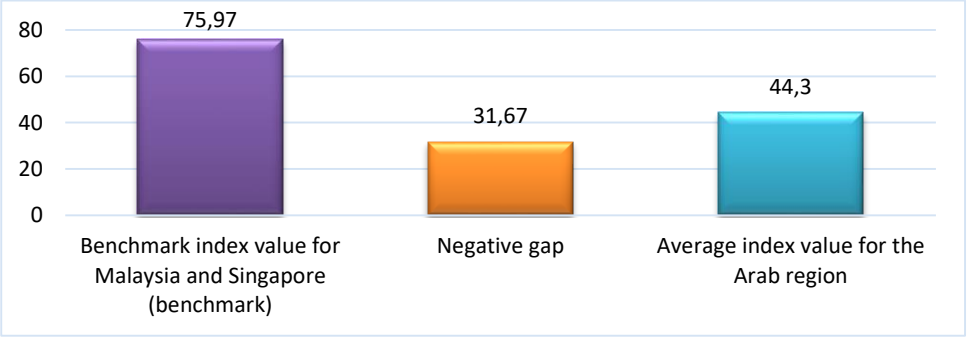
Source: Arab Federation for Digital Economy [(11)]

Table No. (03) shows that the value of the standard index for Malaysia and Singapore was estimated at 75.97, while the average index for the Arab region was estimated at 44.3, lagging behind these two countries with a large negative gap estimated at 31.67, which is a large percentage compared to these two countries. This reflects the low degree of the digital economy in

[11] -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Vision for Digital Economy, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Third Edition, 2023, pp. 192-193.

the Arab region, and this is due to the backwardness of the second and third groups of the Arab region, considering that the first group, which includes the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, are leading countries according to the digital economy indicators.

Figure (02) :Benchmark comparison of Malaysia and Singapore in the Arab region



Source: Arab Federation for Digital Economy [12]

4- The position of the Arab region within the world map of Internet users:

Table (04): shows the position of the Arab region within the world map of Internet users in the year (2021)

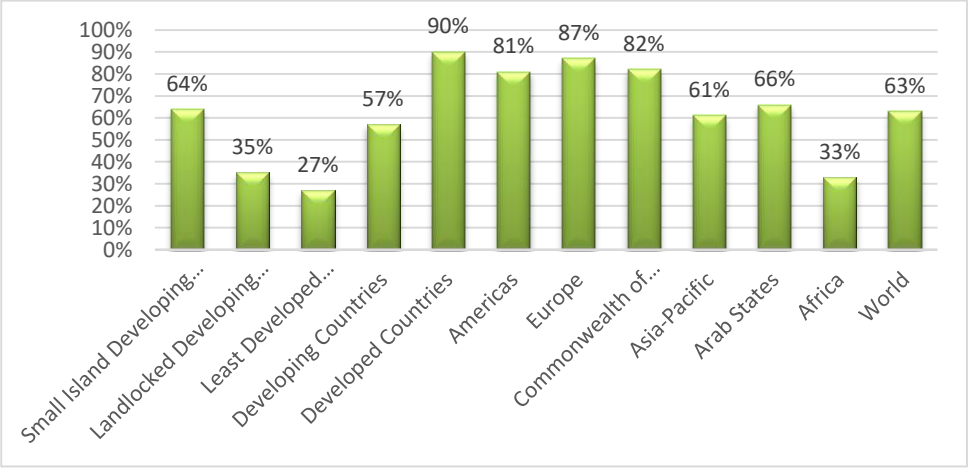
Individuals employed	Percentage
Small Island Developing States	**64%**
Landlocked Developing Countries	**35%**

[12] -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Vision for Digital Economy, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Third Edition, 2023, pp. 192-193.

Least Developed Countries	**27%**
Developing Countries	**57%**
Developed Countries	**90%**
Americas	**81%**
Europe	**87%**
Commonwealth of Nations	**82%**
Asia-Pacific	**61%**
Arab States	**66%**
Africa	**33%**
World	**63%**

Table. (04) indicates that the Internet penetration rate across the world's regions was led by developed countries, Europe, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the Americas, with scores of 90%, 87%, 82%, and 81% respectively. This reflects that these regions have a great capacity to access the Internet, with the Arab region coming in with a score of 66%, a negative gap estimated at 24% over developed countries and an increase estimated at 3% over the world's countries. The African region and the least developed countries came in last with scores of 33% and 27% respectively, which reflects the weakness of the digital infrastructure.

Figure (03): shows the position of the Arab region within the world map of Internet users in the year (2021)



Source : Arab Federation for Digital Economy [13]

Chapter III The reality of the digital economy and sustainable development in the Arab region

Indicators of sustainable development and digital transformation vary from one country to another, and this is due to the extent of these countries' ability to respond to the requirements of digital transformation to achieve the sustainable development goals.

1- The Arab Digital Economy Index for the year 2022

The Arab Digital Economy Index for the year 2022 relies on five main dimensions in its evaluation of the countries of the Arab region, which include (digital foundations, digital

[13] - Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Digital Economy Index 2022, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, pp. 70-71

innovation, digital business, digital citizen, digital government) distributed over nine basic indicators, which are: (institutions, infrastructure, education and skills, e-government, innovation, knowledge and technology, business structure and network readiness, growth of the financing market, sustainable development).

Table (05) : shows the ranking of Arab countries according to the Arab Digital Economy Index 2022

Value in Percentage	Country	Rank
71.37	**UAE**	1
66.07	**Saudi Arabia**	2
65.05	**Qatar**	3
64.89	**Bahrain**	4
61.64	**Oman**	5
61.30	**Kuwait**	6
57.67	**Jordan**	7
54.86	**Morocco**	8
54.03	**Tunisia**	9
52.36	**Egypt**	10
51.92	**Lebanon**	11
46.55	**Algeria**	12
33.64	**Iraq**	13
29.95	**Mauritania**	14
28.90	**Yemen**	15
28.06	**Djibouti**	16
26.06	**Syria**	17
25.53	**Sudan**	18
24.34	**Comoros**	19

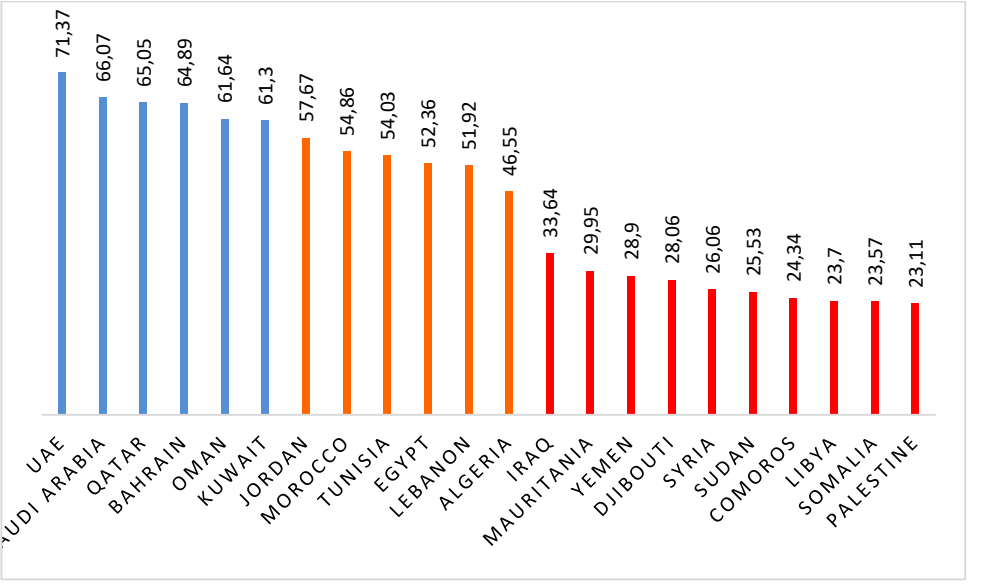
23.70	**Libya**	20
23.57	**Somalia**	21
23.11	**Palestine**	22

Source : Arab Federation for Digital Economy (14)

From Table No. (05), it is clear to us that the UAE topped the Arab region with a percentage of 71.37%, followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait. This is within the first group, which is a pioneer in the digital transformation process. As for the second group, Jordan topped it with a percentage of 57.67%, followed by Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Iraq, while Iraq topped the third group with a percentage of 33.64%, followed by: Mauritania, Yemen, Djibouti, Syria, Sudan, the United Comoros, Libya, Somalia, and Palestine, which came in last place.

Figure (04) : shows the ranking of Arab countries according to the Arab Digital Economy Index 2022

14 -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Digital Economy Index 2022, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, p 74.



Source : Arab Federation for Digital Economy [15]

Table (06) : shows the performance of sustainable development goals according to the Arab Digital Economy Index 2022

Value	Country	Rank
77.27	Qatar	1
76.94	Oman	2
75.93	Saudi Arabia	3
74.04	Kuwait	4
73.67	Bahrain	5
73.21	UAE	6
71.71	Algeria	7
70.15	Tunisia	8

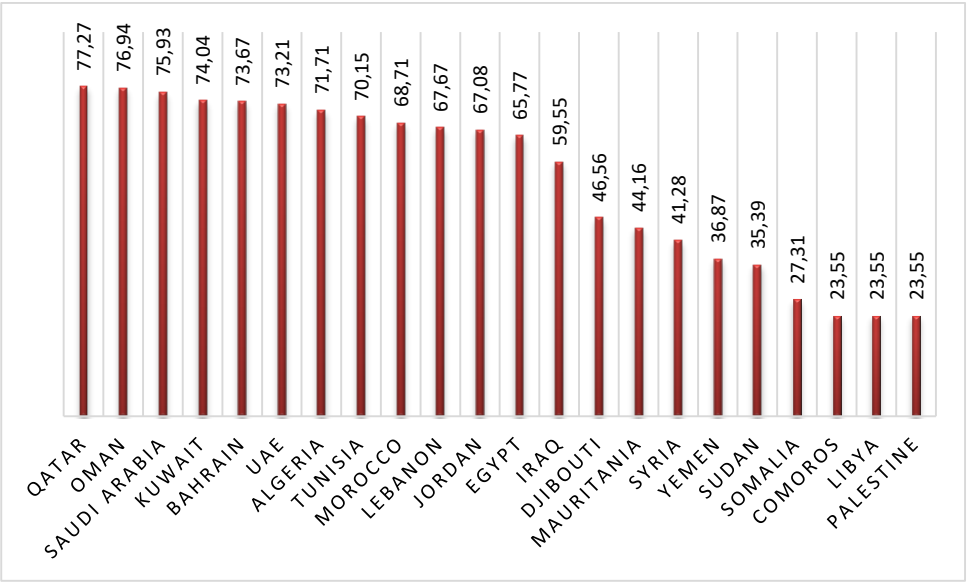
15 -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Digital Economy Index 2022, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, p 74.

68.71	Morocco	9
67.67	Lebanon	10
67.08	Jordan	11
65.77	Egypt	12
59.55	Iraq	13
46.56	Djibouti	14
44.16	Mauritania	15
41.28	Syria	16
36.87	Yemen	17
35.39	Sudan	18
27.31	Somalia	19
23.55	Comoros	20
23.55	Libya	21
23.55	Palestine	22

From Table No. (06), it is clear to us that the State of Qatar ranked first in the Arab countries with a score of 77.27, and it is within the first leading group in the digital transformation process, along with Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, while Algeria came in seventh place directly with a score of 71.71, and it is within the promising group for digital transformation, along with Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, and Jordan. As for Sudan and Somalia, they lagged far behind the leader, while Libya, the United Comoros, and Palestine came in last place, and they are far from achieving the sustainable development goals.

Source : Arab Federation for Digital Economy (2022) [16]

Figure (05) :shows the performance of sustainable development goals according to the Arab Digital Economy Index 2022



Source : Arab Federation for Digital Economy (2022) [17]

2- **The Arab region according to the overall GEMS index for the year 2023**:

This index is a measure that seeks to know and measure the extent to which countries in the Arab region are able to provide effective electronic services that meet the aspirations of their citizens and government efforts through digital public policies

[16] -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Digital Economy Index 2022, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, p 152.

[17] -Arab Federation for Digital Economy, Arab Digital Economy Index 2022, League of Arab States, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, First Edition, 2022, p 152.

provided through electronic portals and mobile applications that include education, health, work, tourism, family, business institutions, transportation, and social welfare..[18]

Table (07) : shows the results of Arab countries according to the overall GEMS index in 2023.

Arab countries	percentages
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	93
United Arab Emirates	92
Qatar	81
Oman	66
Jordan	64
Kuwait	62
Bahrain	59
Morocco	45
Algeria	37
Tunisia	36
State of Palestine	34
Iraq	25
Syrian Arab Republic	13
Yemen	8
Mauritania	7
Libya	7

[18] -ESCWA, Government e- and mobile services maturity index 2023-GEMS, United Nations publications issued by ESCWA, United Nations House, Riad El Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon, 2024, p. 09.

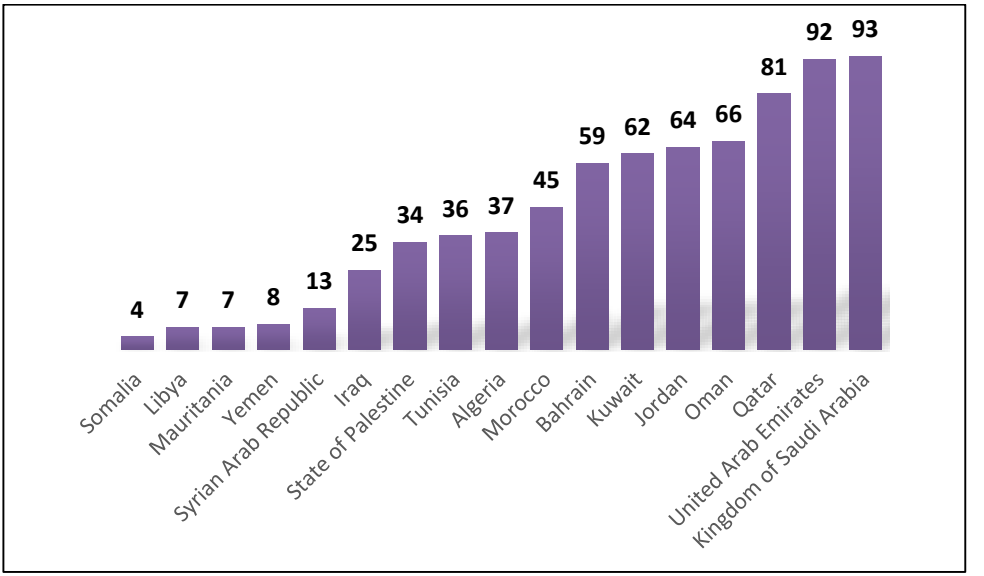
Somalia	4

Source : ESCWA.2023[19]

This table indicates that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia leads the Arab group according to this indicator with a percentage of 93%, which is a large percentage that reflects the status of digital transformation in the Gulf countries, followed by the UAE and Qatar, which are classified within the first group in the Arab region, while Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia came in the middle ranks, but with a large negative gap from the leader estimated at 48%, 56%, 57% respectively, which are within the promising countries or what is known as the second group, while Syria, Yemen, Djibouti, Libya and Somalia came at the bottom of this ranking according to this indicator.

Figure: (06) shows the results of Arab countries according to the overall GEMS index in 2023

19 -ESCWA, Government e- and mobile services maturity index 2023-GEMS, United Nations publications issued by ESCWA, United Nations House, Riad El Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon, 2024, p. 19.



Source: ESCWA.2023[20]

3 -The role of the digital economy in achieving the sustainable development goals according to some Arab countries:

Some Arab countries have been able to benefit from the digital economy to achieve the sustainable development goals and have also been able to make great strides in employing digital technology to eliminate hunger, education, health, welfare, clean water and energy, but these indicators and data vary from one country to another and from one region to another.

20 -ESCWA, Government e- and mobile services maturity index 2023-GEMS, United Nations publications issued by ESCWA, United Nations House, Riad El Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon, 2024, p. 19.

Morocco, through digital technology, has been able to provide farmers with technologies that enable them to increase agricultural productivity in light of climate change through early warning technology.

As for clean water and sanitation, the Sultanate of Oman has been able, by relying on the digital factor and through sustainable innovation, to invest in the field of water management and wastewater treatment through a system for treating water associated with production from artificial reed swamps.

Jordan has also been able to invest well in water recycling by harnessing technological innovation by the private sector, which has become an economic partner in its employment of digital technology.(21)

The United Arab Emirates, through Masdar Clean Energy, is investing in developing utility-scale solar and wind energy projects to enhance energy efficiency, carbon capture and storage projects, and is participating in many pioneering projects in the world by employing digital technology, digital innovation, and attracting foreign investment.(22)

In the field of quality education, Algeria has adopted a project to use the electronic board as an educational tool in Algeria with

21- Sadfa Muhammad Mahmoud, The Role of the Digital Economy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab Region, Public Policy Analysis Paper, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2022, pp. 7-8.

22 -Shen Khatir, Mazraq Warda, Investment in Renewable Energy as a Tool for Achieving Sustainable Development (A Review of Some Experiences of Arab Oil Countries in the Field of Investment in Renewable Energy), Eliza Journal of Research and Studies, Volume: 06, Issue: Special, Algeria, 2021, p. 27.

the aim of reducing the burden of the student's portfolio in the primary education stage, within the framework of the government's work plan to gradually generalize its use as an educational tool within the classroom.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has adopted several strategies to develop its citizens' digital skills, and one of the goals is to establish digital institutions such as the Saudi Electronic University, which grants bachelor's and postgraduate degrees online with multiple options for teachers and students. This is within the framework of investing in human resources and making digital technology one of the basic pillars of the educational process..[23]

The information and communications technology sector has been able to provide new job opportunities for young people in the Arab region, which constitutes a good incentive to invest in this field, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, considering them pioneering countries in digital transformation compared to other Arab countries.(24)

The city of Dubai represents one of the leading models of smart cities in the Arab region, which is managed through digital systems in its management of all public facilities and services. In terms of digital infrastructure, innovation and infrastructure,

[23] -New Project: Using Electronic Boards as a Teaching Tool...e-onec.com https://www.e-onec.com‹

[24] -Research and Information Center, Digital Economy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Reality and Challenges), Riyadh Chamber, Saudi Arabia, 2022, p. 20.

the countries of the Maghreb and the Levant have demonstrated a great ability to transform towards a digital economy compared to less advanced countries, especially since countries such as the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia are ranked among the top ten countries in the world in terms of employing digital technology[25]

CONCLUSION:

Through this study, we can reach a basic conclusion that the shift towards the digital economy and achieving the sustainable development goals has become an inevitability sought by most countries that adopt effective digital strategies and policies. The Arab region, especially the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, has become moving forward in this approach by investing massively in this technology and making it the main focus of their economies and the extent of its positive impact on the sustainable development goals.

As for the recommendations and proposals of these studies, they were represented in the following:

- The need for coordination between Arab countries in order to raise the level of digital transformation for the countries of the second and third groups.
- The move towards the data economy, which has become a feature of this era by relying on artificial intelligence, the

[25] -Sadfa Muhammad Mahmoud, The Role of the Digital Economy in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab Region, Public Policy Analysis Paper, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2022, pp. 7-8.

Internet of Things, and preparing digital infrastructure and cyber security.

- Relying on global tools, measures and indicators to determine the readiness of the Arab region towards the digital economy.
- Relying on transparency as a basic criterion in providing information and data and the need to involve the private sector and civil society in the digital transformation process.
- Replicating pioneering international experiences in the digital transformation process, such as Malaysia and Singapore, taking into account the specificity of the Arab region and identifying weaknesses and working to overcome them.
- Making the Arab citizen the focus of the development process and the necessity of investing in the human factor by continuously improving his capabilities and enabling him to possess digital technology that mimics the technologies of leading countries in digital transformation.

STUDY RESULTS:

The study concluded with a set of results that can be summarized as follows:

- The digital economy in the Arab region is one of the main objectives of good investment in digital infrastructure.
- The Arab region is divided into three leading groups, promising and backward, which reflects the real difference in the digital policies adopted by these countries.

- Some Arab countries from the first and second groups were able to employ digital technology in the service of sustainable development goals, such as the UAE, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco.
- Some Arab countries are still far from digital transformation, and this is due to the weakness of their infrastructure and the strategies adopted by these countries.

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