

HSE GCII Advisory Board

In 2024, an Advisory Board was formed to enhance the calculation methodology of the HSE Global Cities Innovation Index, conduct comprehensive discussions of the obtained ranking results, and assist with their dissemination on a global scale. The Board included internationally recognized scholars, urban governance practitioners, and experts involved in the development of the innovation economy. Their inspiring ideas, valuable suggestions, and practical recommendations widened the scope of the study, enriched its interpretation, and helped compile the ultimate map of high tech and creative industries.

Members of the Advisory Board

Marcus T. Anthony

Associate Professor, Beijing Institute of Technology, China

Jonathan Calof

Full Professor, University of Ottawa, Canada

Mlungisi Cele

Chief Executive Officer, National Advisory Council on Innovation, South Africa

Steven Griffiths

Professor and Vice Chancellor for Research, American University of Sharjah, UAE

Michael Kahn

Research Fellow, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Keun Lee

Distinguished Professor, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

Iwao Ohashi

Strategic Development through International Cooperation Expert, Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones of Russia, Russia

Mohamed Ramadan A. Rezk

Director, Egyptian Science, Technology and Innovation Observatories, Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, Egypt

Fernando Rizzo

Director, Center for Management and Strategic Studies, Brazil

Muddassar Sarfraz

Assistant Professor, Zhenjian Shuren University, China

Ozcan Saritas

Director, Future Foresight, Rochester Institute of Technology, UAE

Surachai Sathitkunarath

Executive Director, APEC Center for Technology Foresight, Thailand

Kuniko Urashima

Visiting Professor, Nagoya University, Japan

Opening Remarks from Members of the HSE GCII 2024 Advisory Board



Marcus T. Anthony

Associate Professor,
Beijing Institute of Technology, China

The HSE Global Cities Innovation Index is an important development for organizations and individuals wishing to locate their work and lives during this increasingly mobile era of the 21st century. The strength of the HSE GCII lies in its simplicity, where each of the 200 cities is given a global rank based on three indicators – Technological Development, Creative Industries, and Urban Environment. In turn, each of these indicators is ranked, providing a convenient and efficient overview of the “attractiveness” of the world’s great cities in terms of working and living. The Index will also be of great value to national, regional, and city leaders worldwide, as it provides insights and empirically-grounded indices which suggest why a significant proportion of the globe’s innovation leaders are clustered only in 10 countries. It thus presents a potential prompt for re-thinking developmental strategies in the increasingly important struggle to attract and retain talent.



Jonathan Calof

Full Professor,
University of Ottawa, Canada

Congratulations to the National Research University Higher School of Economics Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge (ISSEK) on the release of their 2024 edition of the HSE Global Cities Innovation Index. This index is a valuable resource that recognizes the importance of understanding innovation at the city and regional levels. By focusing on these levels, the index provides insights that are useful for both researchers studying innovation and practitioners working to make their cities and regions more innovative. The HSE Global Cities Innovation Index is a testament to HSE’s ongoing leadership in the field of innovation research and measurement, and I look forward to seeing how the index continues to evolve in the future.



Steven Griffiths

Professor and Vice Chancellor for Research,
American University of Sharjah, UAE

As we examine the landscape of global urban innovation through the lens of the HSE Global Cities Innovation Index 2024, it is clear that cities are the cornerstone of technological advancement and creativity in an increasingly geopolitically complex, yet interconnected, world. The index provides a comprehensive view of how cities are

fostering environments that are conducive to innovation, from technological development to creative industries and urban livability.

In the context of the Middle East, Dubai stands out as a source of innovation, ranking in the top 50 global innovation centers. However, it is important to recognize that Dubai represents a specific city archetype – a relatively small, wealthy, and dispersed city that has leveraged its resources and strategic vision to create a hub for innovation and creativity.

While Dubai's success offers valuable insights, it is not a one-size-fits-all model for urban innovation in the Middle East. Other cities in the region must consider their own distinct social, political, economic and cultural contexts when striving to enhance their innovation ecosystems. The HSE GCII 2024 provides a comprehensive framework that these cities can use to assess and improve their performance across various dimensions of innovation.

For instance, while Dubai excels in areas like startup ecosystems and venture capital, other Middle Eastern cities might focus on leveraging their historical and cultural assets to boost creative industries. Cities with larger populations and different urban layouts may prioritize developing excellent public transportation systems and enhancing digital infrastructure to improve urban mobility and connectivity.

The index's emphasis on factors such as the presence of leading universities, R&D organizations, and highly cited researchers underscores the importance of knowledge creation and diffusion. Middle Eastern cities can use these metrics to guide investments in education and research, tailored to their specific strengths and goals.

Moreover, the inclusion of indicators related to quality of life, such as cost of living, public services, and environmental factors, highlights the holistic approach needed for innovation. Cities in the region can focus on creating livable urban environments that attract and retain talent, a key factor in building innovative ecosystems.

As we move forward, it is essential for Middle Eastern cities to embrace their unique identities while striving for innovation excellence. By understanding their specific archetypes and socio-technical systems, these cities can develop targeted strategies that enhance their innovation capabilities, contribute to economic diversification, and improve the quality of life for their residents. The HSE Global Cities Innovation Index 2024 serves not just as a ranking system, but as a source of inspiration for cities to navigate the complex landscape of urban innovation.



Keun Lee

Distinguished Professor,
Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

It is great that this year's data on innovativeness of cities around the world is finally published. Definitely, it is a very unique and most comprehensive data set of about 1,000 global cities across as many as 90 indicators, capturing technological development, creative industry and urban living conditions. Given that such work takes a lot of time and efforts, it is amazing that this institute at HSE University has been doing this work for many years. It is a valuable and useful contribution for city officials, citizens, and policy makers around the world.



Iwao Ohashi

Strategic Development through International Cooperation Expert,
Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones of Russia, Russia

I welcome the publication of the HSE Global Cities Innovation Index 2024 and express my sincere respect to its production team and all authors for their significant contribution!

There are global city rankings being published around the world quite regularly, but after taking a small part in preparing HSE GCII 2024, it became obvious to me that this report is by no means less valuable than those published in other countries, considering the scale of gathered data, the high quality of analysis, as well as objectivity and neutrality of its researchers. No doubt, this report will attract the attention of experts and specialists in the field of urban development and innovation and be readily implemented in many countries of the world.

In the context of unprecedented geopolitical turbulence, Russian cities face serious challenges. For further sustainable development of the heavily sanctioned Russian economy and industry, it is essential to introduce innovations without stopping, and it is namely cities that are the fittest to provide that. The modern “turn to the East” and the International North–South Transport Corridor open Russian cities to international relations and they have got to find a way to enhance their urban environment and reinvigorate the creative, scientific, technological, and innovative activities by uniting their limited resources in the most effective way. It is, of course, a big challenge, but considering the potential of Russian cities and their residents, we may also expect big opportunities waiting ahead.

I am convinced that the HSE GCII 2024 ranking will make a solid input into expert research in urban development and innovation around the world and into the future strategic development of Russian cities.



Mohamed Ramadan A. Rezk

Director, Egyptian Science, Technology and Innovation Observatories,
Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, Egypt

Urban innovation comes to the global foreground, with cities increasingly turning into basic planks for technological advancement, sustainable development, and growth in economies. Urban innovation plays a crucial role in shaping modern economies by driving productivity, attracting investments, and fostering entrepreneurship. By integrating advanced technologies and sustainable practices, innovative cities enhance efficiency and create environments conducive to business growth. This not only boosts local economies but also positions these cities as competitive hubs on the global stage, attracting talent, capital, and new industries that further stimulate economic development.

The HSE Global Cities Innovation Index 2024 is a significant initiative aimed at capturing the evolving dynamics of innovation by evaluating and ranking 200 cities across 55 countries. This is not an index of rankings but an in-depth, almost guide-like exposure to the mechanisms and strategies behind the great, thriving cities in the contemporary world. It gives insights into how urban areas can harness innovation to solve pressing challenges and improve the quality of life for their residents. The HSE GCII 2024 provides a multifaceted

analysis of urban innovation, leveraging a broad spectrum of indicators to assess the performance of cities across various domains.

In HSE Global Cities Innovation Index 2024, five African and Middle Eastern cities were included in the top 200: Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Cape Town (South Africa), Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Cairo (Egypt), and Beirut (Lebanon). These cities reflect the growing influence of the region in the global innovation landscape. For example, Dubai and Cairo, have demonstrated significant advancements in various indicators, reflecting their growing influence on the global innovation landscape. Dubai ranks 4th globally in the Urban Environment Subindex, which is bolstered by its top position in mobile Internet speed (1st) and its high safety level, ranked 10th globally. In contrast, Cairo, ranked 91st overall, also showcases strengths in technological development, ranking 45th, with a notable presence in leading universities (ranked 10th), but struggles with environmental issues, ranking 199th in ecology and health systems. Cape Town, on the other hand, faces different challenges and opportunities in the Global Cities Innovation Index. With an overall rank of 194, it is particularly hindered by poor mobility, ranking 192nd in public transport and 192nd in digitalization, with fixed broadband Internet speed ranked 178th.

Looking ahead, there is reason to hope that future editions of the Index will include a larger number of cities from both Africa and the Middle East. Of course, the challenge will lie in how to find indicators that best grasp these very different urban milieus and their respective potentials. As cities in these regions move forward and become more innovative, their inclusion in future rankings will indeed underscore their achievements, while at the same time increasing global knowledge about innovation in cities.



Fernando Rizzo

Director, Center for Management
and Strategic Studies, Brazil

The HSE Global Cities Innovation Index uses a comprehensive set of indicators that cover various aspects of infrastructure, technology, urban environment, and innovation, but also topics that are not so conventional in city assessments, such as aspects of the creative industry (fashion, design, literature, and games) and tourism.

It uses multivariate criteria for evaluating the sampled cities, which require different data sources. In some cases, the sources indicated have a user collaboration profile, such as the Numbeo and Tripadvisor platforms. These collaboration tools are useful and necessary, but there can be significant variation in terms of the collaboration between users from developed and developing countries. The low participation of users from countries outside the global North may, in some cases, affect the performance of cities on the aforementioned tools.

In addition, we observed that some indicators that characterize flourishing areas in regions of the Global South (such as the music, fashion or games industry, for example) consider aspects specifically related to commercial performance, which can be characterized as a barrier to achieving better ranking results for Latin American, African or Asian cities; they may have an intense and productive market in local creative industry sectors, without necessarily showing good commercial performance on international platforms.