

# Ishtar sets out!

2022 Annual Review



About Us

# 2022 – An incredible Ishtar Journey

It is only since May 2022 that Ishtar MENA Analytics was officially registered with Companies House in the UK, and we have already mastered significant challenges and were able establish a solid foundation as a think tank, research institute, and a platform for young scholars. This first annual report is a tribute to an incredible journey that has just begun.

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Ishtar MENA Analytics Limited incorporated at Companies House

Our Mission

# Message from the Founders

On the verge of graduating university and bursting with the desire to put our education to good use, we took the initiative to create Ishtar MENA Analytics as a platform for an ambitious, creative, and diverse community. By design, Ishtar is a network and a platform for young academics and professionals to engage in an intersectional, interdisciplinary, and intercontinental dialogue about the various socio-political topics of the MENA-region.

But it turned out to be so much more than that. Soon a distinct company profile emerged around three key pillars: First, a news blog, giving young scholars the opportunity to publish detailed analyses of political conflicts. Second, an academic research journal, fostering rigorously researched insights into the region's multifaceted challenges. And third, an intelligence and consultancy branch to offer our services to individuals, organizations, and companies in need of tailored and high-quality expertise.

Less than a year later, this formula nourished a fascinatingly diversified and interesting company profile with a healthy growth in terms of output and outreach, and an engaged and inspiring network of affiliates. We are proud to share that we connected with scholars and professionals in Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Israel, Russia, the UK and Switzerland. We were also able to join a research program in cooperation with ReportOut and are currently working on establishing the MENARA research journal.

We're humbled to share this journey with you on the following pages. Make sure to follow our work on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram, and don't hesitate to reach out to us with feedback or proposals.

Sincerely,

Gabriele & Damian

# Meet the Team /

## Our Dedicated Political Analysts

2022 was a busy year for our founders Damian Berger and Gabriele Guzzi. Both were juggling their fascinating yet ever-growing commitments with Ishtar Analytics, while at the same time finishing their postgraduate degrees at King's College London and SOAS University, respectively. Moving between London and Switzerland, with research and work trips to Tunisia, Lebanon, and Morocco proved to be a challenge – but an enriching one for Ishtar and our network.

In autumn, we were fortunate to land Gian Maria Bordin as our Editor in Chief for the MENARA Journal. He holds a Master in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Geneva and brings extensive experience as editor and writer from his activities at the ETü magazine in Zurich.



**Gabriele Guzzi**

Founder &  
Managing Partner  
London / Bern



**Damian Berger**

Founder &  
Managing Partner  
Tunis



**Gian Maria Bordin**

Editor in Chief  
Ishtar Publications  
Tel Aviv / Abu Dhabi

# A Fresh Perspective on the MENA Region

Ishtar MENA Analytics is more than a research collective with a regional focus. It is a harbor for young academics and professionals in and around the region, a mouthpiece for their fresh ideas and perspectives – and through that, a catalyst of a new generation's approach to regional studies. One that is devoid of the encrusted neocolonial and orientalist remains of its predecessors, one that tackles complexity with critical thinking, and, most of all, one that embraces the dialogue between cultures, ideologies, generations, and scientific approaches.

## Our Mission //

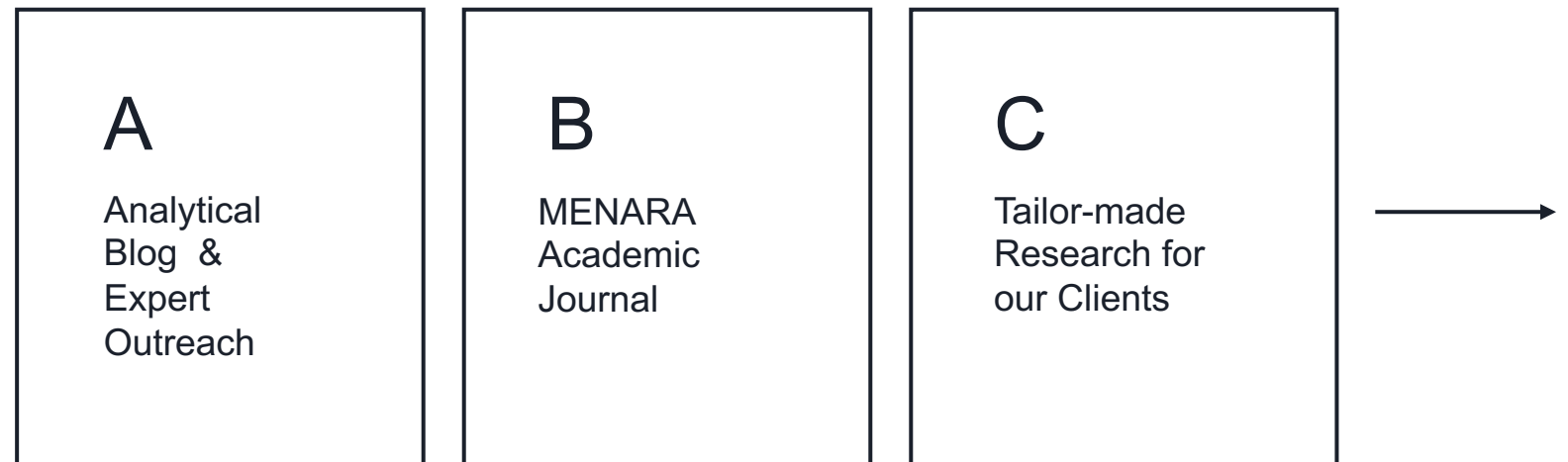
The MENA region harbours an incredibly diverse and complex socio-political landscape, rendering it difficult to navigate for policymakers and professionals alike. We are committed to providing rigorous and up-to-date analyses, tailor-made for specific purposes with clients, as well as in the service of a well-informed wider public.

Discover the three  
pillars of Ishtar Analytics



## The Three Pillars of Ishtar Engagement

We firmly believe that research needs to be conducted as unbiased as possible, which is why our diverse researchers include a well-balanced mix of different research approaches and methods. We are able to provide the highest standard of research by maintaining close ties to academics and drawing on the talents of fine young academics of some of the best universities in the field. In addition to classical think tank work such as publishing analytical pieces and discussing our insights with scholars and pundits, Ishtar Analytics offers first-quality research consultancy on political, economic, and social issues in and around the MENA region. On top of that, our in-house academic journal MENARA (Middle East and North Africa Research & Analyses) is dedicated to providing a platform for young academics providing fresh perspectives on some of the most pertinent issues of the region.



The Three Pillars of Ishtar Engagement

# Analytical Blog & Expert Outreach

In line with our vision that science and research should be publicly available, our analysts comment on regional events from a scientific perspective. We especially encourage young graduates to actively engage via our think tank channels, as we are dedicated to foster the ample capacities of early-career academics and professional across the globe. On the other hand, the published article go through a rigorous internal review system to ensure the quality of the content. The published articles are available to everybody and should stimulate a more informed debate about very complex socio-economic issues of the MENA-region.

In addition to our publishing channels, our analysts actively engage in knowledge-sharing activities, discuss their ideas with experts and pundits, as well as participate in conferences and panel discussions on related topics.



Universidade Europeia



Highlight  
2022

**Damian Berger** spoke about Food Security in North Africa at the **Africa XXI Conference** in Lison, Portugal



## Highlight 2022

The **call for papers** for the first issue of **MENARA Journal** has been published, and first submissions are currently under review.

The Three Pillars of Ishtar Engagement

# MENARA Academic Journal

For the first issue of our biannual MENARA (MENA Research & Analyses) academic journal under the title “Opportunity in Crisis”, we are looking for contributions reporting on social, economic, and political opportunities, innovations and reforms to tackle the region’s manifold crises. We are especially encouraging young academics and scholars from various backgrounds to contribute with their insights and ideas in the form of academic papers, essays and analyses. At Ishtar MENA Analytics, we are committed to fostering the talent of promising young academics, regardless of nationality, gender, sex, race, and publication history.

Under the auspices of our new editor in chief Gian Maria Bordin, the MENARA project is well under way, the call for paper is being circulated at some of the best academic institutions globally, and first submissions are currently under review.



The Three Pillars of Ishtar Engagement

# Tailor-made Research for our Clients

We provide tailored background research or data production for private, commercial, or analytical use tailored to the needs of our clients. Our analysts are multilingual, academically trained at the best universities in the field, have first-hand regional networks, and ample professional experience. They provide first-class, reliable and thorough analyses of regional political, societal and economic events and relations.

The first project will always remain particularly memorable. In collaboration with ReportOUT and our Moroccan partners Alwan, Nassawiat, the Moroccan LGBTQ+ Community and Elille Collective, we embarked on the exiting and highly relevant research project "Out In Morocco". Together, we strive to provide reliable and up-to-date insight into the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities in Morocco with a strong focus on its legal, political and socio-economic dimensions. Commenced in spring 2022, the project is currently in the phase of data collection, first results are expected in spring 2023. Our insights will be presented at the "Safer to be me" Conference 2023.

Ishtar 2022



Highlight  
2022

For **ReportOUT**, Ishtar Analytics is designing and implementing a study on the lived experiences of SOGIESC people in **Morocco**.

**Ishtar**  
ISHTAR MENA ANALYTICS



**ANALYTICS**  
**MOROCCO'**

WITH REPORTOUT



ReportOUT

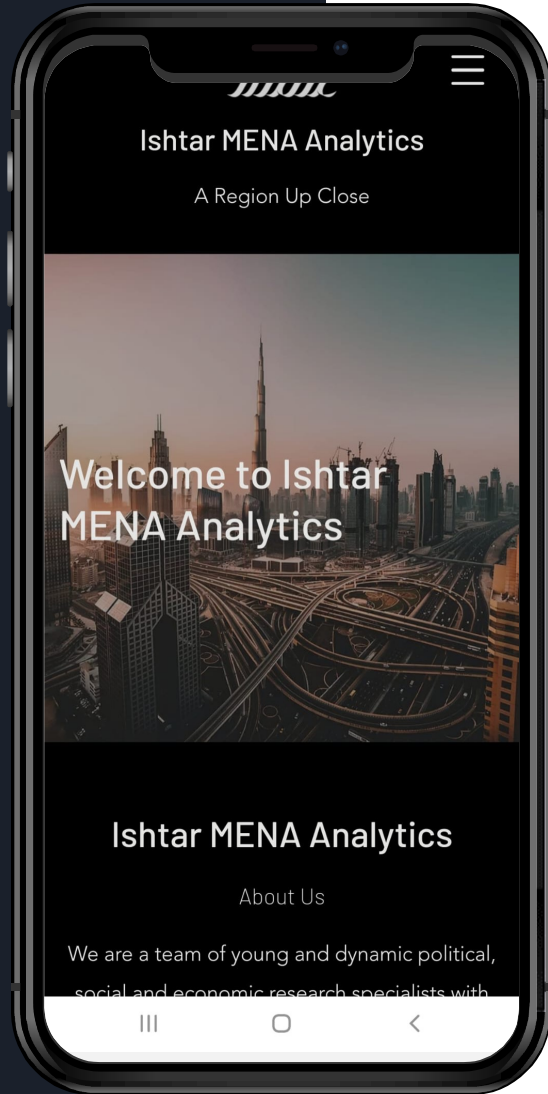
Ishtar Analytics Young Experts' Pool

# Brilliant Minds

At Ishtar Analytics, we are aiming to expand our work in the near future and take on new projects across a wide range of topics. With that in mind, offered some of our most trusted affiliates the opportunity to become part of our Ishtar MENA Young Experts Pool, an informal association of our valued and scientifically well-endowed young academics and professionals with expertise in and on the MENA region.

Many of them answered our call, blessing Ishtar with a highly diverse, comprehensive, and effective network of young and ambitious talent eager to contribute to the Ishtar journey in 2023. We are humbled!





How we reach you & How you reach us

# Our Communication

Communication is key for a healthy client-user relationship, as well as for increasing our outreach and making our analysts' voices heard. At Ishtar, we communicate in English on all official matters, but are more than happy to provide our services also in German, Italian, French, and Arabic. Our content is posted and advertised on our website as well as our social media channels.



48

We've reached visitors from 48 different countries in 2022 – and many decided to leave a like and spread the word!

# Continuing the Journey in 2023

Spring:  
MENARA 1<sup>st</sup> issue

Summer:  
Projects & Conferences

Autumn:  
Innovation at Ishtar



With an amazing team of coworkers and affiliates behind us, Ishtar Analytics is starting 2023 with the determination to continue, expand, and grow the work we love. Our first and much-awaited MENARA issue will be launched in spring, while Sunderland's #SafertobeMe conference will host our study on Morocco. In addition, we are looking forward to launching new projects and taking on new clients.

**Let's continue to put a spotlight on the MENA region!**



... let's continue to make young voices heard in 2023!

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Ishtar MENA Analytics  
2022 Journey

