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# **Executive Summary**

In the GCC region, the state remains a major force in driving the economic progress and social welfare. Worldwide, it is emerging that data science is a key enabler for governments as they seek to deliver targeted and better services to the public in different realms. Even in the GCC, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is shifting service delivery operations to cyberspace, through its e-government and smart government digital transitions.

Data science is the collective process that uses theoretical, mathematical, computational, and practical methods like algorithms, and statistics to review, analyze and extract valuable knowledge and information from raw data. Also referred to as datalogy, it enables individuals and organizations to extract required or valuable information that may be used for multiple purposes, such as decision making, product development, trend analysis and forecasting.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is increasingly changing the data landscape and is significantly impacting every aspect of human lives, including businesses, science, and governance. In that context, data science is a synthesis of statistics, advanced computing technology and Al. The strategic advantage lies in the integration across assorted and interdependent complex data resources to support realtime decision-making.

For GCC, the transformation of large data sets and associated data into practically actionable intelligence is the underlying promise of data science. Availability of leadership commitment and state of the art technology and infrastructure foundation serve as advantages to the GCC countries to set ambitious targets in terms of being leaders in data science. This is evident from the GCC government initiatives like UAE's Smart Data Strategy, Tasmu Qatar, KSA Open and Big Data Strategy and Bahrain Open Data Strategy.

The new data environment creates new opportunities to governments and other stakeholders involved in policy processes. Therefore, every actor including governments, universities, think tanks and civic movements will have to strengthen their data science capacity. This implies that data scientists, along with researchers, and analysts would play a key role in the analysis of public polices and the formulation of workable policy narratives.

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### **Authors**

M.R. Raghu CFA, FRM, FCMA Head of Research +965 2224 8280

rmandagolathur@markaz.com

#### Sudhakaran Jampala

Manager - Policy

+965 2224 8000 Ext: 4613 SJampala@markaz.com

#### Brinda Vijayakumar

Policy Analyst

+965 2224 8000 Ext: 4630 BVijayakumar@markaz.com

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