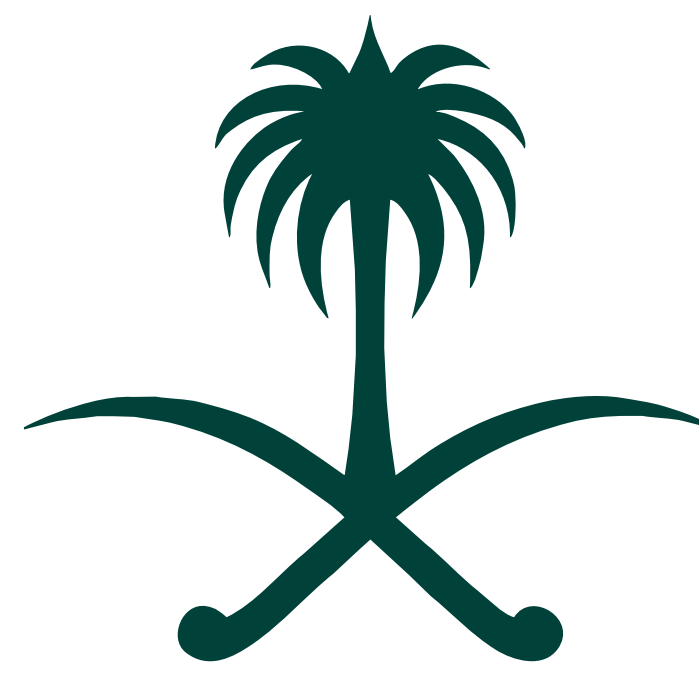




# ACCELERATING TO ACHIEVE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Saudi Arabia's Voluntary National Review 1444-2023





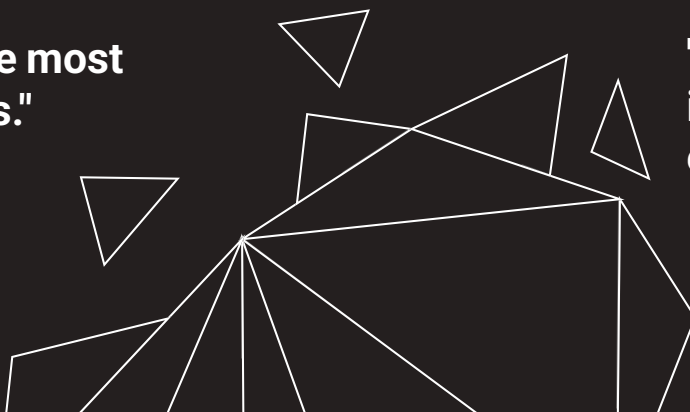
**Crown Prince and Prime Minister**  
His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

**"Success stories always start with a vision, and the most successful of visions are built on our strong points."**

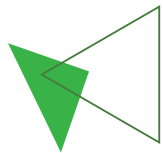


**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**  
King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

**"My primary goal is to be an exemplary and leading nation in all aspects, and I will work with you in achieving this endeavour."**







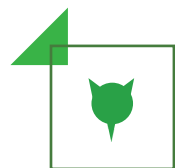
# Key Facts about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



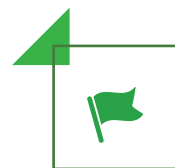
**Location**  
Arabian Gulf



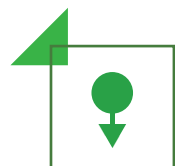
**Capital**  
Riyadh



**Number of regions**  
13



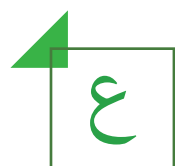
**Population year 2022**  
32,175,224



**Area**  
2,215,500 km<sup>2</sup>



**Government**  
Monarchy



**Language**  
Arabic



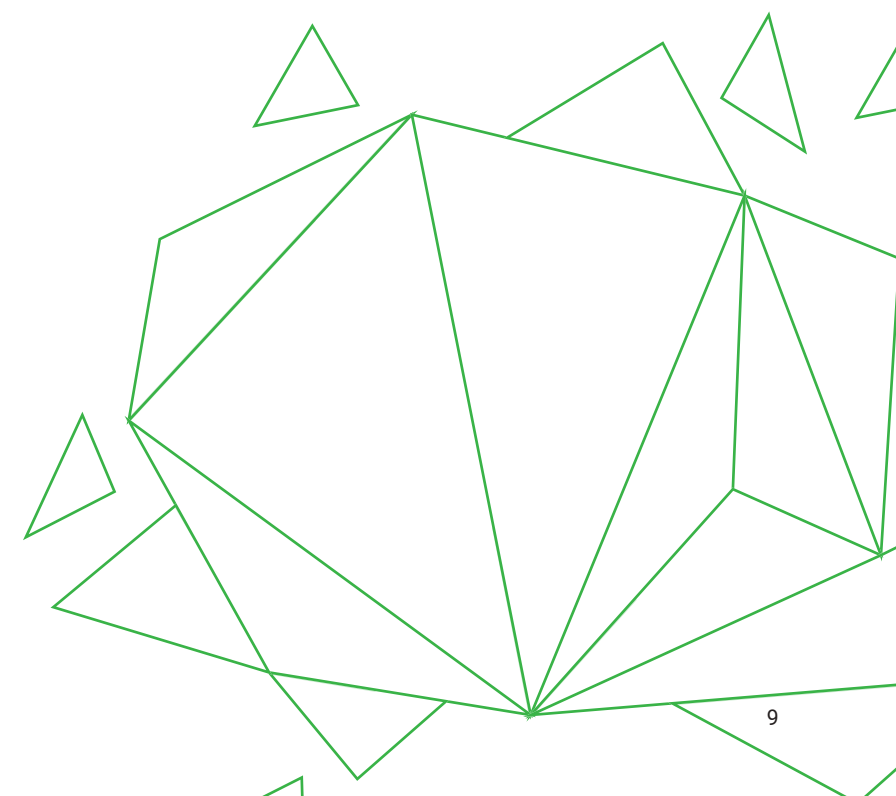
**Currency**  
Saudi Riyal (SAR)

# Acronyms & Abbreviations

Aada	National Center for Performance Measurement
AGFUND	Arab Gulf Program for Development
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
AYSDN	Arab Youth Sustainable Development Network
BA	Bachelor's Degree
BENA	Build & Employ National Abilities
CCE	Circular Carbon Economy Program
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
CCUS	Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage
CEDA	Council of Economic and Development Affairs
CEM	Clean Energy Ministerial
CLG	King Salman Center for Local Governance
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
COVAX	Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DTP	Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis
EGDI	United Nations e-Government Index
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESTIDAMAH	National Research and Development Center for Sustainable Agriculture
EV	Electric Vehicle
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G20	Group of 20
GASTAT	General Authority for Statistics
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFSA	General Food Security Authority
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GOSI	General Organization for Social Insurance
HCDP	Human Capability Development Program
HCV	Hepatitis C Virus
HiAP	Health in All Policies
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRDF	Human Resources Development Fund
HRH	His Royal Highness
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IKTVA	In-Kingdom Total Value Add
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
KACST	King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology
KAPSARC	King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center
KAUST	King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
KSCEE	King Salman Center for Education for Employment
KSRELIEF	King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LRI	Labor Reform Initiative M&E
MA	Master's Degree
MCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MCTS	Ministerial Committee of Traffic Safety
MDA	Al Madinah Region Development Authority

MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning
MERS	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome
MEWA	Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
MGI	Middle East Green Initiative
MHRSD	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MMR	Measles, Mumps, and Rubella
MODON	Saudi Authority for Industrial Cities and Technology Zones
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoMRA	Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
MWAN	National Center for Waste Management
NCCHT	National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCTC	National Tobacco Control Committee
NCVCCD	National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDGS	National Digital Government Strategy
NDMO	National Data Management Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NREP	National Renewable Energy Program
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NUPCO	National Unified Procurement Company
OECD	Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development
OSP	Oil Sustainability Program
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PCV	Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine
PDPIR	Personal Data Protection Interim Regulations
PhD	Philosophy Doctorate
PIF	Public Investment Fund
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
R&D	Research and Development
REEF	Sustainable Agricultural Rural Development Program
RTA	Road Traffic Accident
SABIC	Saudi Steel Industries Corporation
SAFCSP	Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones
SALIC	Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Company
SAR	Saudi Riyal
SDAIA	Saudi Data & AI Authority
SDB	Social Development Bank
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSC	Sustainable Development Steering Committee
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SFD	Saudi Fund for Development
SFDA	Saudi Food and Drug Authority
SFES	Special Force for Environmental Security
SGI	Saudi Green Initiative
SIO	Saudi Irrigation Organization
SIRC	Saudi Investment Recycling Company
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SMS	Short Message Service
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SYS	Saudi Youth for Sustainability
TB	Tuberculosis TRSDC                      Red Sea Development Company
TSE	Treated Sewage Effluent
TVTC	Technical and Vocational Training Corporation
UCCN	UNESCO Creative Cities Network

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFTS	UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
VCM	Voluntary Carbon Market
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization



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## Foreword by HE Minister of Economy and Planning

It is an honor for me to present the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2022, which outlines our progress towards achieving the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, the Kingdom has put sustainable development at the forefront of national priorities by integrating it into the Vision 2030 – our country's blueprint for our long-term goals and expectations. Saudi Arabia's strong commitment to sustainable development, as exemplified by the achievements highlighted in this report, is further shaped by our deep-rooted traditions and a collaborative approach taken by our government towards sustainable development. As we reach the halfway point of Vision 2030 and the global development agenda, this report reflects on our experience with the SDGs since our last VNR in 2018, showcasing the Kingdom's unprecedented reforms and achievements in the area of sustainable development.

In this report, we outline the tremendous progress the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made in human development, environmental protection, and economic development. Our achievements are confirmed by the global Sustainable Development Report 2022, which has documented the significant advancement that Saudi Arabia had made in most SDG areas. The following are some highlights of our achievements across the three SDG pillars, with more details presented in the following pages of this report.

**Human development** is a key dimension of our progress with the SDGs, encompassing significant strides in education, healthcare, and social services. We have ensured that every single family has access to essential public services like education, healthcare, electricity, water, and sanitation. Since 2017, we have provided \$26.6 billion in social protection through our Citizen Account Program, a social welfare program that supports low- and middle-income households. Of all births in Saudi Arabia, 98% are attended by trained healthcare personnel. The under-five mortality rate is 9 deaths per 1,000 live births. We have seen a significant reduction in tuberculosis, with the incidence rate dropping from 11 per 100,000 in 2015 to 8 per 100,000 in 2021. Infrastructure improvements, technology adoption, and increased professional training have enhanced the efficiency and capacity of healthcare. We have digitally connected 500 health centers and hospitals to our electronic healthcare system. We are investing in our future by allocating 8.3% of our GDP to education. The government actively promotes women's rights through a range of initiatives that facilitate women's participation in the labor force, entrepreneurship and decision-making. Female participation in the labor force has risen from 19.4% in 2015 to 32% in 2020.

In pursuit of the SDGs, we have also prioritized **environmental protection** and **natural resource preservation**. We have launched the flagship Saudi Green Initiative with the objective of producing 50% of our power from renewable sources, planting 10 billion trees and rehabilitating 40 million hectares of land, as well as protecting 30% of terrestrial and marine areas by 2030. We have launched 77 initiatives to deliver on the Saudi Green Initiative goals. We have powered 150,000 homes with clean energy and have developed 11.4 GW of renewable energy capacity. We have installed 10 million smart electricity meters, which help us cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1.8 million tons every year. We have launched the Circular Carbon Economy approach, adopted by G20 countries, and have spearheaded the Middle East Green Initiative which fosters regional collaboration to meet climate targets. We have reduced our agricultural water consumption by 9.6 billion-m<sup>3</sup>. We have taken significant steps in increasing vegetation cover and combatting desertification by planting 18 million trees, rehabilitating 60,000 hectares of degraded land, and cultivating 250,000 shrubs in AIUla nurseries in 2022 alone. In our commitment to preserving the land and sea, we've protected an area spanning 66,000 km<sup>2</sup>, invested \$25 million specifically for the conservation of the Arabian leopard, and successfully reintroduced more than 1,200 animals back into their natural habitats in 2022.

Through concerted effort, we have achieved remarkable success in **economic development** by making our economy more diversified, competitive and resilient. We have established the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) as a global investment powerhouse and one of the world's most impactful investors, enabling the creation of new sectors and opportunities that will shape the future global economy, while driving the economic transformation of Saudi Arabia. Through PIF, we have established 77 companies across 13 strategic sectors, creating over 500,000 direct and indirect jobs. The number of SMEs increased from 447,749 in 2016 to 626,669 in 2020. The share of labor in Saudi Arabia's GDP in 2020 reached 49.2%, a substantial increase from 40.6% in 2018. We have 17 major cities undergoing transformation under the "Future Saudi Cities Program 2014-2022". In the UN E-Government Development Index, our ranking has improved significantly, moving up to the 31st spot in 2022 from 52nd in 2018. Financial sector reforms have opened the market to international finance and foreign capital, and ambitious labor market reforms have increased the participation of women and young people in the workforce.

These achievements are evidence of our nation's commitment to sustainable development. They are also the result of the collaborative and inclusive approach we have taken, involving all sectors of society and all segments of the population. Guided by our traditions and vision, we remain dedicated to working towards a future where all our people live in prosperity and security and contribute to a peaceful and prosperous planet.

**HE Faisal F. Alibrahim**  
Minister of Economy and Planning



## Introduction

This report presents the progress made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals since its first VNR in 2018. The report was written in full conformity with the guidelines set forth by the United Nations Secretary General and the Handbook for Voluntary National Review Preparation. Developed through a highly participatory process, it presents the views of a broad range of national stakeholders in an integrated fashion, including government entities, civil society organizations, private sector companies, representatives of media and academia, and other stakeholders.

The report outlines the growing prominence and increasing integration of sustainable development principles into the Saudi policy framework and society at large. It provides an overview of the efforts made by the government and non-governmental actors to implement the SDGs. Particular attention in this report is paid to the Leave No One Behind principle, examining the progress made in ensuring that everyone, regardless of their socio-economic background, has equal opportunities to access the benefits of the development process. The report includes a chapter on challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the actions Saudi Arabia took to contain the spread of the virus, mitigate its health and economic effects and set the economy on a path to full recovery.

The report also highlights the involvement of civil society organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, and youth in implementing the SDGs. Many civil society organizations and private companies are addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainability in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and ecotourism, often in partnership with government institutions. This collaborative approach ensures complementary efforts and diverse perspectives in pursuing SDGs

### The following are the main messages of the report:

- Saudi Arabia has placed sustainable development at the forefront of national priorities by mainstreaming it into the **Vision 2030**, the country's transformational long-term plan. The Vision 2030 seeks to transform Saudi Arabia into a thriving and dynamic nation, while at the same time balancing economic growth with social and environmental sustainability. The integration of Vision 2030 and the SDGs represents a concerted effort to promote sustainable and inclusive development.
- The Kingdom views **sustainability as a driving force for growth and advancement**, and strives to integrate economic, social, and environmental considerations into development initiatives. This commitment is reflected in the extensive institutional and policy framework that underpins the SDGs, including the establishment of the overarching **Sustainable Development Steering Committee** in September 2021. Sustainability has become **central to policy development**, with key measures taken by the government to foster policy coherence for sustainable development. To this end, the government has adopted a whole-of-society and a whole-of government approach to policymaking. This commitment is further reflected in the strong emphasis Saudi Arabia placed on the implementation of the sustainable development agenda during its G20 Presidency in 2020, which focused on three main goals: "empowering people, protecting the planet, shaping new horizons through the digital economy and employing innovative technologies."
- This VNR report highlights the progress Saudi Arabia has made across all SDG areas since 2018. This progress has been broad-based, occurring across multiple sectors and areas. Out of the 116 SDG indicators tracked by the country, only seven have not experienced improvement during the period in question. The significant progress Saudi Arabia has made across most SDG areas was also confirmed by the the 2022 Sustainable Development Report, a global assessment of progress toward the SDGs. This report, demonstrated the Kingdom's improvement in most SDG areas. It found only three SDGs - **14**, **15**, and **16** - had experienced stagnation. These, however, are areas where the Saudi government has taken vigorous action and where significant results are expected in the near term. For example, in 2021 the Saudi government launched the Saudi Green Initiative, which directly which directly addresses **SDGs 14** and **15**. Furthermore, as noted further in this report, the Saudi government has launched additional initiatives that address the priorities of **SDG 16**.

- The Kingdom has launched numerous initiatives to support sustainable development. The **Saudi Green Initiative** positions Saudi Arabia as a global leader in climate action and environmental protection. The **Middle East Green Initiative**, a regional effort to address climate change, and the **Circular Carbon Economy** approach that, targets net-zero emissions, have also been launched. The **Saudi Public Investment Fund**, one of the world's largest sovereign funds, has committed billions of dollars in financing for private sector projects promoting economic growth and sustainable development. Furthermore, institutions like the **King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology**, the **Saudi Data & AI Authority**, and multiple **incubators and accelerators** foster technological development and innovation.
- Saudi Arabia's commitment to sustainable development is long-standing and present in all social, environmental, and economic dimensions. **In the social sphere**, Saudi Arabia has established an extensive **social protection system**, that incorporates **social insurance programs, social safety nets, and labor market support programs**. This system provides the population with wide-ranging support in areas such as health, retirement, unemployment insurance, subsidies, housing, education, and employment. As shown in the respective sections of the VNR report, the Kingdom has tackled childhood malnutrition, enhanced its healthcare system, maintained high vaccination rates, and achieved near gender parity in education. Human rights are fortified through multiple programs and the Human Rights Commission. Women's empowerment has progressed through increased workforce participation and leadership representation. Women's rights have been prioritized, adopting laws promoting equal pay, freedom of travel, and protection from violence.
- Saudi Arabia places great importance on the **protection of the environment and the preservation of natural resources**. The Kingdom has committed to having 50% of its power generated from renewable sources by 2030. The government is scaling up renewable projects, electric vehicle adoption, hydrogen production, energy efficiency, and carbon capture, utilization, and storage. As a result of significant investments by the government in desalination technology, nearly 100% of the population has full access to safely managed drinking water services. The Kingdom participates actively in climate negotiations, has ratified the Paris Agreement, and aims for net-zero emissions by 2060 through the circular carbon economy approach. The government has also established ambitious afforestation efforts and protection of marine and land areas.
- In the area of **economic development**, Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in infrastructure and industrial development. Driven by the key objective of economic diversification, Saudi Arabia is expanding sectors such as tourism, technology, and diversified energy. The government has extensively promoted innovation in various industries, including a fast digitalization process that is taking place across all sectors. The Kingdom has made significant progress in creating jobs, with a particular focus on female labor force participation, which rose from 19.4% in 2015 to 36% in 2022. Multiple large-scale urban development programs are expanding green spaces, pedestrian walkways, and recreational areas.
- Saudi Arabia has a rich history of **humanitarian aid and development assistance**, driven by its Islamic principles and commitment to international development. Known as one of the world's most generous donors, the Kingdom ranked eighth globally in humanitarian assistance according to the UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service and first in providing official development assistance as a percentage of its gross national income, according to the OECD-DAC in 2021. Historically, Saudi Arabia has provided \$87.5 billion in international aid to combat global poverty, benefiting 166 countries through 5,424 projects spanning 39 sectors.
- Saudi Arabia's achievements outlined in the VNR report demonstrate its **unwavering commitment to sustainable development**. These achievements are the result of **unprecedented reforms** ushered in by the Vision 2030 and the **collaborative and inclusive approach** involving all segments of society. Saudi Arabia remains dedicated to a future where all people live in prosperity and security and contribute to a peaceful and prosperous planet.

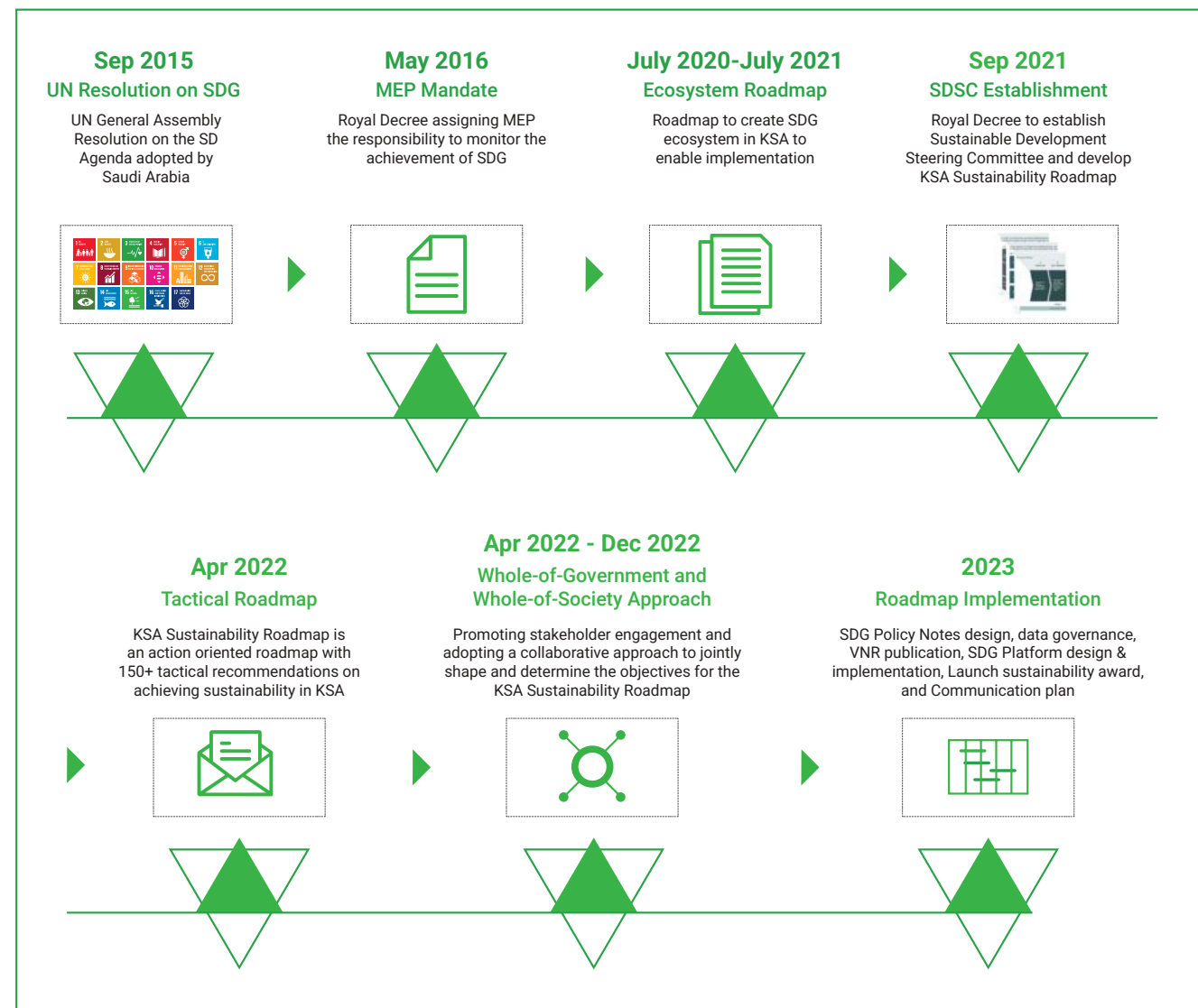


# Policy and Enabling Environment

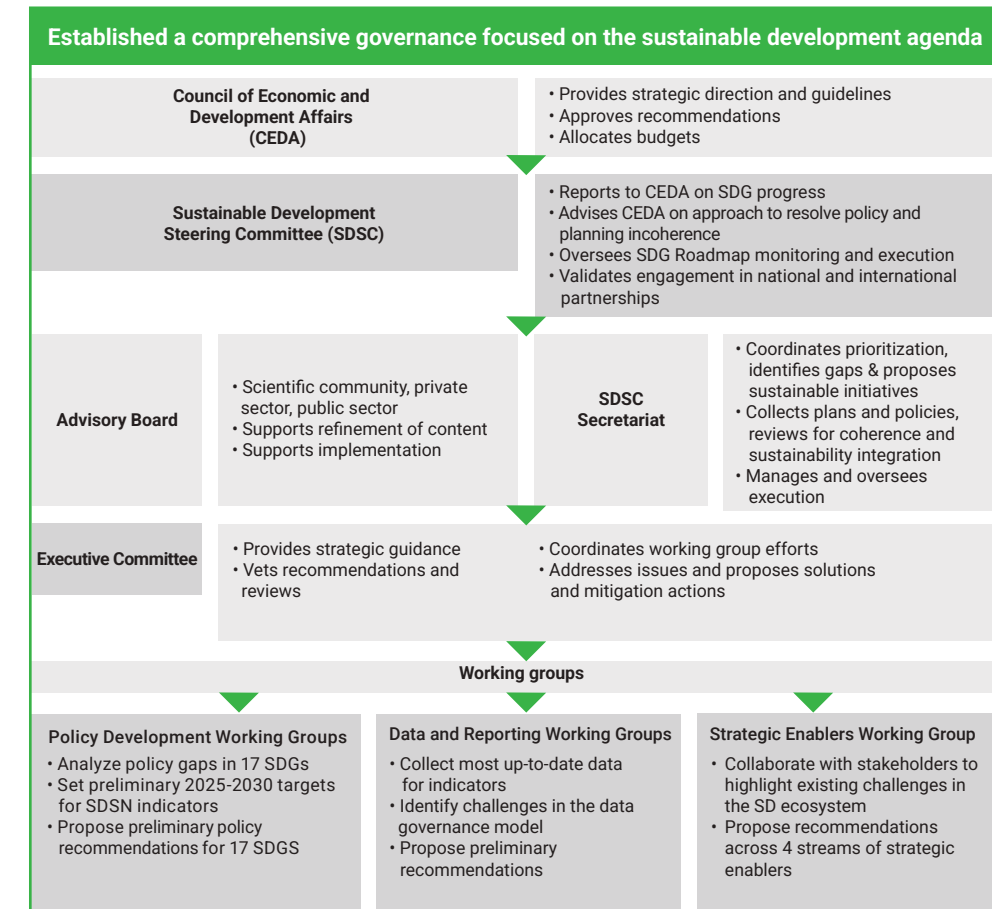
This section of the report describes Saudi Arabia's institutional framework for achieving SDGs, details the policy foundations provided by Saudi Vision 2030, illustrates the interconnectedness between Vision 2030 and SDGs, and outlines how SDG working groups continuously improve the policy framework for sustainable development, ensuring a cohesive approach to development and sustainability.

## Institutional Framework

Saudi Arabia has developed a comprehensive roadmap for achieving the sustainable development agenda in the country and internationally. This roadmap is underpinned by a number of Royal Mandates and dedicated institutional structures designed to mainstream the "Sustainable Development" agenda in the country's policy and institutional framework. The figure below summarizes the establishment process of SDG-related institutions and the eco-system of institutions that support the implementation of SDGs.



As can be seen from the figure below, multiple institutions are responsible for localizing and implementing SDGs. A clear governance framework ensures coordination among agencies and assigns specific structures to relevant the SDGs. Interministerial cooperation addresses overlapping targets, while ensuring transparency and accountability through a national reporting system that monitors and publishes the country's progress on sustainable development efforts.



The following represent the main institutional structures facilitating cooperation on the sustainable development agenda:

**Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA):** headed by the Crown Prince, CEDA oversees economic and development policy, including Vision 2030 and SDGs.

**Sustainable Development Steering Committee (SDSC):** The committee is led by H.E. the Minister of Economy and Planning and includes representatives from 20 government entities. These encompass the Ministries of Human Resources and Social Development; Health; Education; Environment, Water, and Agriculture; Energy; Finance; Justice; Industry and Mineral Resources; Municipal and Rural Affairs; and Housing; the Interior; Commerce; Transport and Logistics Services; Foreign Affairs; Communications and Information Technology; Investment; and Media. The committee also involves the Development Authorities Support Center, the Human Rights Commission, and the Strategic Management Office (SMO).

**Executive Committee (EC):** This committee oversees the implementation of SDSC's decisions and ensures coordination and integration.

**Advisory Board:** Including experts from various stakeholder groups, this board provides advice and recommendations to SDSC and Executive Committee.

**Secretariat:** The role of the Secretariat is played by the Ministry of Economy and Planning, which is responsible for administrative and technical support for SDSC and monitoring SDG progress.

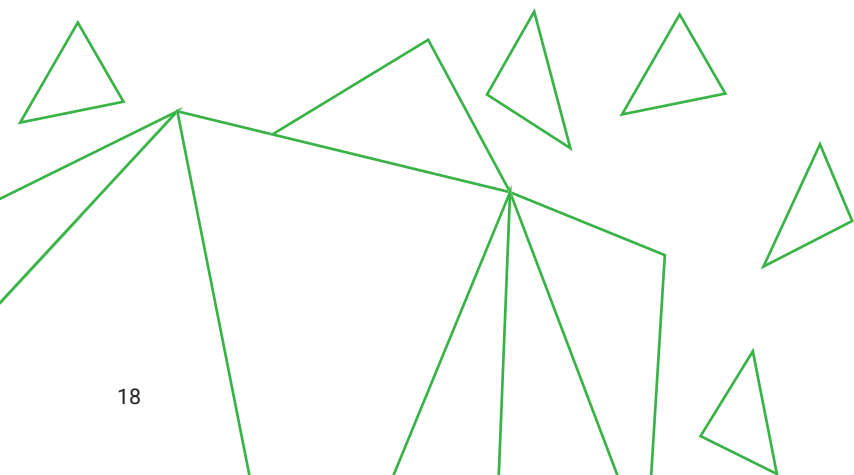
**Working Groups:** There are three working groups under SDSC – Policy Development, Data and Reporting, and Strategic Enablers. These working groups support SDG implementation and provide a platform for collaboration and coordination among stakeholders. They are composed of representatives from key government agencies and stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, civil society organizations, and international organizations.

In addition to the institutional structures listed above, the following government agencies play a particularly important role in the coordination and tracking of the achievement of SDGs in Saudi Arabia.

**Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP):** The ministry coordinates the implementation, oversees the development of national strategies and plans, and ensures inter-agency collaboration in the context of SDGs.

**General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT):** As the country's statistical agency, GASTAT produces data and information for SDG indicators, ensures availability of reliable data, designs new surveys, and enhances existing ones.

**National Center for Performance Measurement (Adaa):** This center assesses and monitors government entities' performance, improves efficiency and accountability, assists in the planning stage, and promotes a performance focused culture.





# Saudi Vision 2030

The Kingdom's sustainable development process is guided by Vision 2030, which outlines a comprehensive and integrated strategy for economic and social development. Vision 2030 was forged to transform Saudi Arabia into a thriving and dynamic nation, while at the same time balancing economic growth with social and environmental sustainability.

## Saudi Vision 2030 is built around three themes: a Vibrant Society, a Thriving Economy, and an Ambitious Nation.

A **Thriving Economy** provides opportunities for all by building an education system aligned with market needs and creating economic opportunities for the entrepreneur, the small enterprise as well as the large corporation. Therefore, we will develop our investment tools to unlock our promising economic sectors, diversify our economy and create job opportunities. We will also grow our economy and improve the quality of our services, by privatizing some government services, improving the business environment, attracting the finest talent and the best investments globally, and leveraging our unique strategic location in connecting three continents.

A **Vibrant Society** is vital to achieving the Vision and a strong foundation for economic prosperity. We believe in the importance of a vibrant society. Members of this society live in accordance with the Islamic principle of moderation, are proud of their national identity and their ancient cultural heritage, enjoy a good life in a beautiful environment, are protected by caring families and are supported by an empowering social and health care system.

Our **Nation is Ambitious** in what we want to achieve. We will apply efficiency and responsibility at all levels. Our third theme is built on an effective, transparent, accountable, enabling and high performing government. We will also prepare the right environment for our citizens, private sector and nonprofit sector to take their responsibilities and take the initiative in facing challenges and seizing opportunities.

To implement Vision 2030, the government has activated multiple strategies, plans, projects. Under Vision 2030, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia values human-centered development. It aims for a balanced, sustainable economy, paying special attention to environmental sustainability and natural resource preservation. Vision 2030 introduces several large-scale programs that aim to diversify income sources and support businesses. They also focus on creating job opportunities and enhancing efficiency in both government and private sectors. The government's policy under Vision 2030 gives priority to various areas, including social protection, health, and education. Environmental policies focus on increasing vegetation, reducing carbon emissions, and combating pollution. They also aim to tackle land degradation and protect marine life. Vision 2030 relies on collaboration

between the public and private sectors, and civil society. Under the Vision 2030, the government has created opportunities for civil society and private sectors to play significant roles in the country's development agenda.

### Transformative Achievements of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030

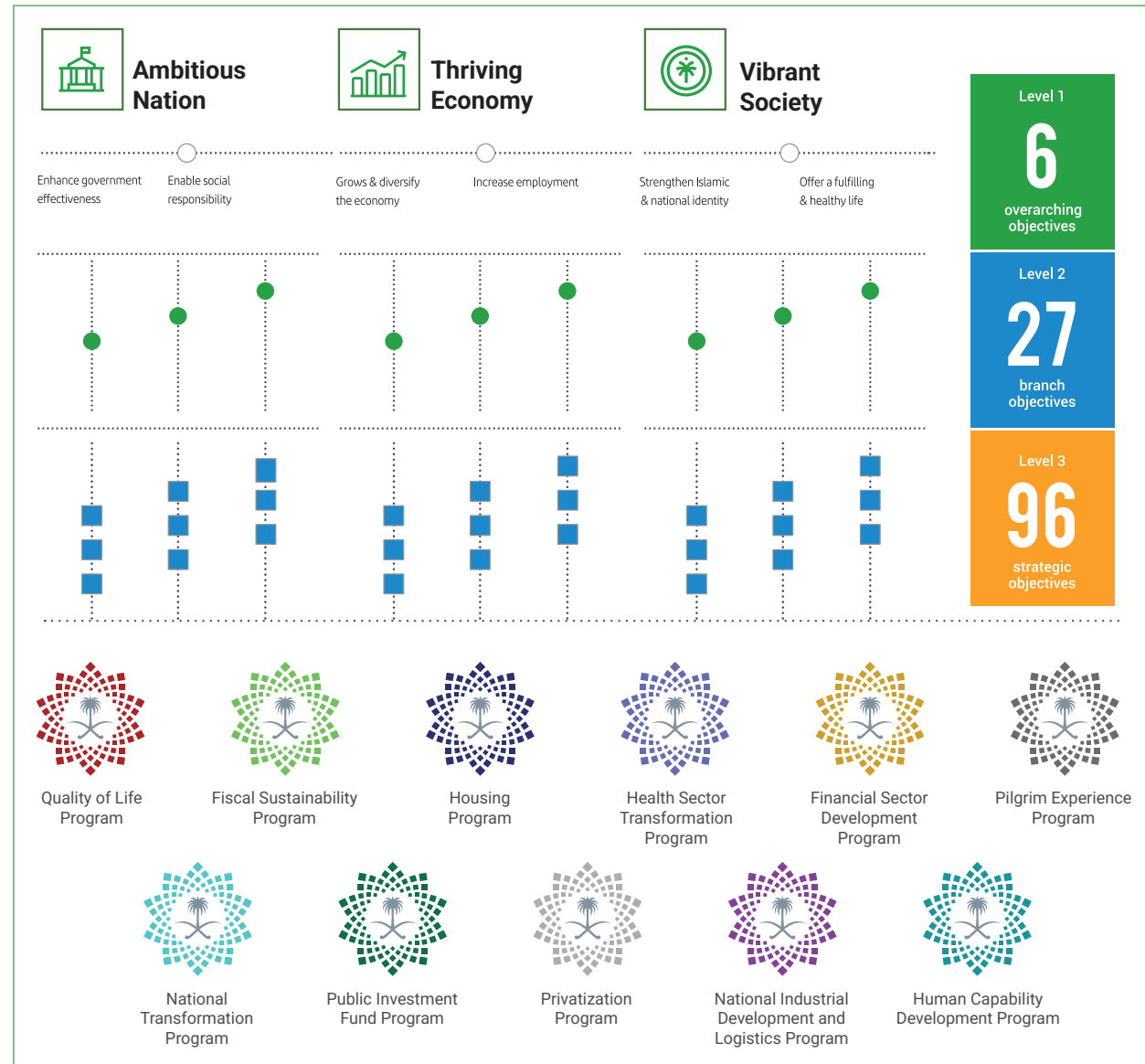


رؤية  
2030  
المملكة العربية السعودية  
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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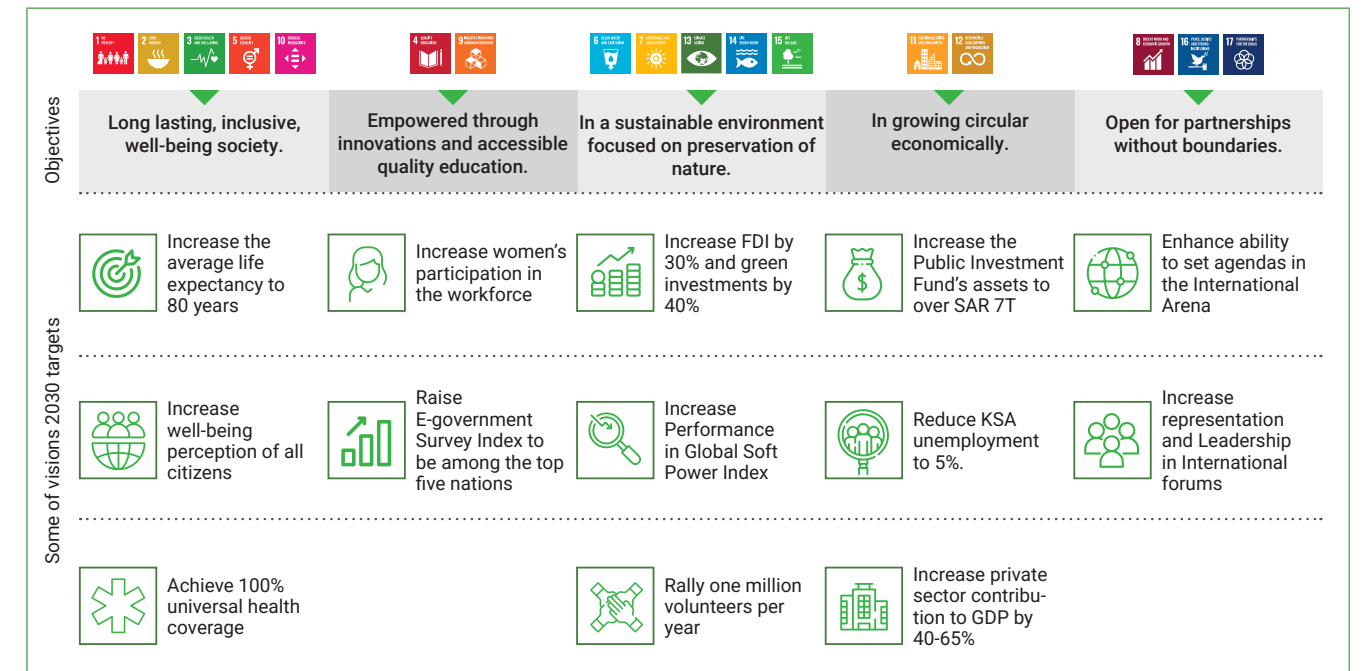
 Diversification of Economy	 Quality of Life Improvements Health and Education	 Environment Protection
 Economic Growth	 Women's Empowerment	 Green and Vibrant Cities
 Infrastructure Development	 Youth Empowerment	 Promotion of Heritage & Culture
 Job Creation	 Social Protection for the Needy and Vulnerable	 Tourism Development

The expansive policy framework put in place by the Saudi government under Vision 2030 is illustrated in the figure below.



### Interconnectedness of Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Agenda

The government of Saudi Arabia has followed an integrated approach to achieve both the Saudi Vision 2030 and the SDGs. The Vision 2030 and SDG targets are interrelated and complementary in nature. They share a common goal of promoting sustainable development. The Vision 2030 targets set the framework for the achievement of the SDG targets by creating a roadmap for sustainable development and growth. The interrelated nature of the Vision 2030 and SDG targets is shown in the following figure.






The Saudi government is closely monitoring the progress made towards achieving both sets of goals and recognizes the equal importance of each. While significant progress has been made with regards to the measurement of SDGs and Vision 2030 KPIs, the government has identified some challenges. For example, the Vision 2030 KPIs do not encompass the entire scope of SDGs, leading to a lack of coverage. In some cases, the methodology of measurement and data collection for KPIs does not consistently align with SDGs methodologies, which creates inconsistencies. There are also challenges related to outdated data that require updating and inaccurate measurement or misreporting. These challenges are being addressed jointly by GASTAT and Aada, with support from United Nations (UN) agencies.

### Continuous Policy Development in Support of the Achievement of SDGs

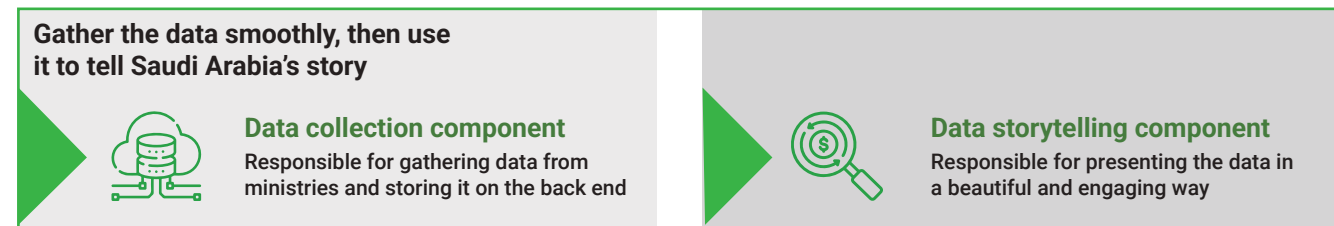
While Vision 2030 outlines a high-level roadmap for sustainable development and growth, the Kingdom's policy framework is continuously evolving in response to changing needs and contextual factors. The SDG working groups play an important role in developing recommendations for the government and other stakeholders on how to achieve the SDGs. Since their establishment, these working groups have formulated 127 recommendations intended to inform the development of policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development. The figure below shows the distribution of these recommendations by working group in each thematic area. At the time of this report's publication, about 10% of these recommendations have been implemented.



 <b>Policy Development</b>	<b>Working Group 1</b> Increase private sector contribution to GDP by 40-60% <b>50 Preliminary Recommendations</b>	<b>Working Group 2</b> Improve the overall productivity of Saudi Arabia by setting the ground for youth to be ready for the future <b>18 Preliminary Recommendations</b>	<b>Working Group 3</b> Ensure long-term sustainability of KSA's lands, waters & natural resources. protect environment <b>26 Preliminary Recommendations</b>	<b>Working Group 4</b> Reach sustainable growth by building robust international partnerships and building on <b>15 Preliminary Recommendations</b>	<b>Working Group 5</b> Make cities and communities more sustainable by promoting circular economy and Preliminary recommendation <b>18 Preliminary Recommendations</b>
	<b>Data Governance</b> <b>4 Recommendations</b> Data coverage: more than 90% of Saudi Arabia SDG and SDSN indicators fully covered by 2030		<b>Data Capture &amp; Monitoring</b> <b>3 Recommendations</b>		<b>SDG Reporting</b> <b>2 Recommendations</b>
 <b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting</b>	<b>Communication:</b> <b>5 Recommendations</b>		<b>Capacity building:</b> <b>4 Recommendations</b>	<b>Financing for sustainable development:</b> <b>4 Recommendations</b>	<b>Science, technology and innovations:</b> <b>3 Recommendations</b>
	 <b>Strategic Enablers</b>				

The Sustainable Development Steering Committee (SDSC) developed 17 policy papers, with each paper focusing on a specific SDG. These policy papers are currently undergoing a thorough review process. They highlight key challenges associated with the achievement of each SDG, providing a detailed analysis of the issues that need to be addressed to achieve the desired outcomes. SDSC has adopted a policy coherence approach in developing these policy papers, acknowledging the interconnected nature of SDGs. By carefully determining the challenges and interdependencies between the SDGs, the government is better positioned to develop effective policies.

In 2023, SDSC decided to adapt new technologies to aid the gathering and display of data related to the sustainable development agenda. This was in direct response to challenges identified earlier, such as those with outdated, missing, or unreported data, or data misaligned with international sources. The platform consists of two components:



- **Data collection component:** This is an internal tool to streamline data-related processes involving multiple Saudi government stakeholders, automating the flow of requests for gathering and reviewing SDG-related data. It will also help automate sending the data out to external consumers downstream, i.e. UN agencies. By making sure responsibilities are clearly mapped out and with the approval pipeline in place, the process can now be managed more efficiently, with any underlying issues visible more clearly.
- **Data storytelling component:** Its objective is to visualize the data gathered in a format that's suitable for wide audiences. By employing advanced data visualization techniques (animations, 3D graphics), the Kingdom seeks to communicate its goals and the progress it achieves to Saudi citizens and the international public, including institutional stakeholders worldwide.

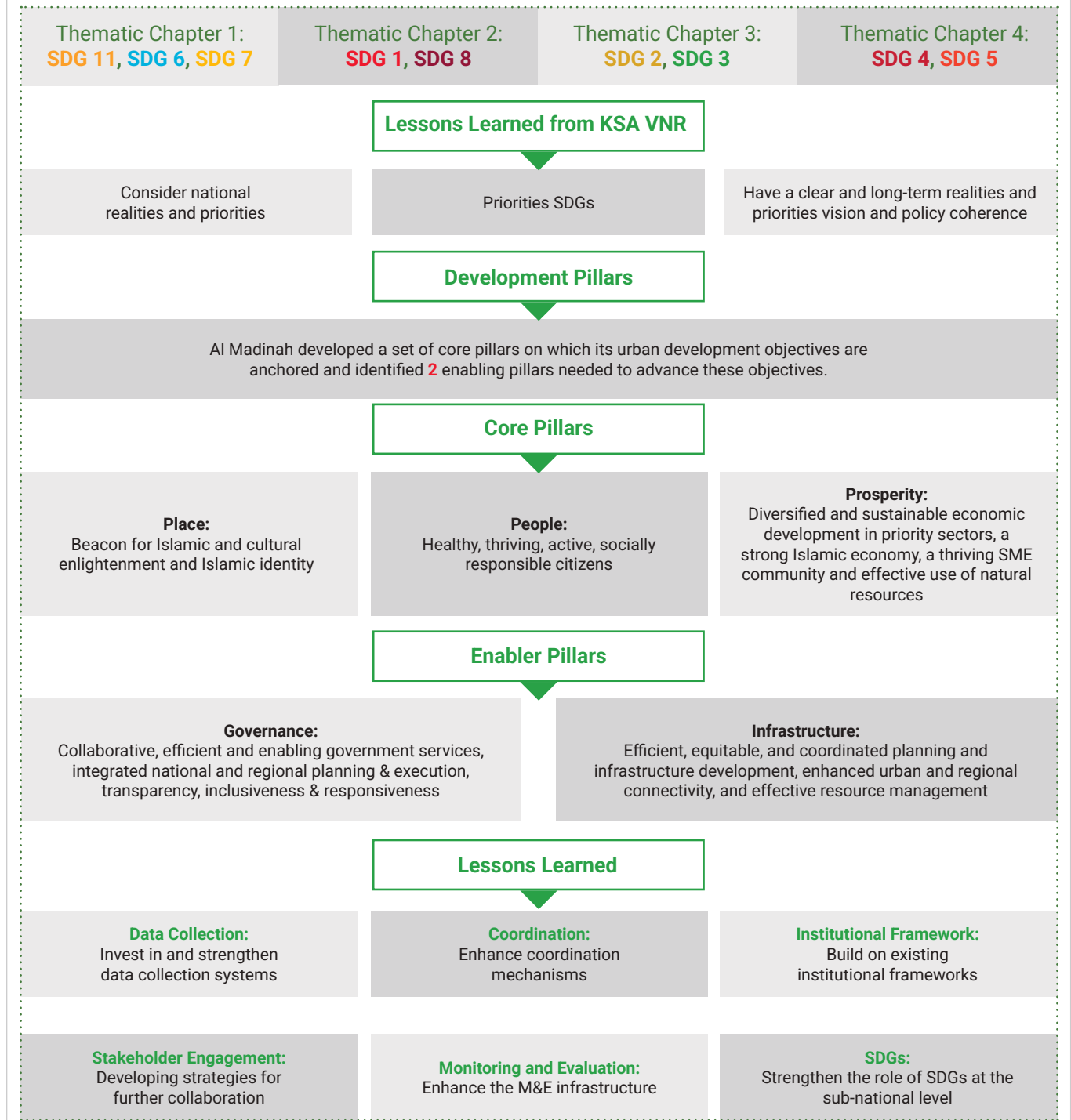
## Localization of SDGs in Saudi Arabia

A key development in Saudi Arabia since the last VNR in 2018 has been the localization of SDGs. This process is expected to intensify further and foster capacity building among local entities and personnel working on SDGs, it will ensure solutions for the distinct challenges faced by each province and city. As part of these efforts, the AI Madinah Region Development Authority (MDA) presented the "Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of SDGs in AI Madinah" in early 2023.<sup>1</sup> The VLR reported on how the city is working towards achieving the SDGs and its alignment to global and national programs.

<sup>1</sup> AI Madinah is a culturally significant and historic city in Saudi Arabia. It is renowned as the second holiest city after Mecca and serves as an important religious destination for millions of Muslim pilgrims annually. Its rich heritage, combined with modern urban development, makes it a unique and vibrant city with diverse cultural and economic aspects.

## AI Madinah City Voluntary Local Review 2023

The AI Madinah VLR carefully adapted Lessons Learned from a thorough review of 92 VLRs. Rather than addressing all goals, or formulating the VLR around specific thematic areas, AI Madinah opted for a hybrid approach. The AI Madinah VLR groups those SDG Goals into thematic chapters that included the analysis of interlinked SDG Goals.

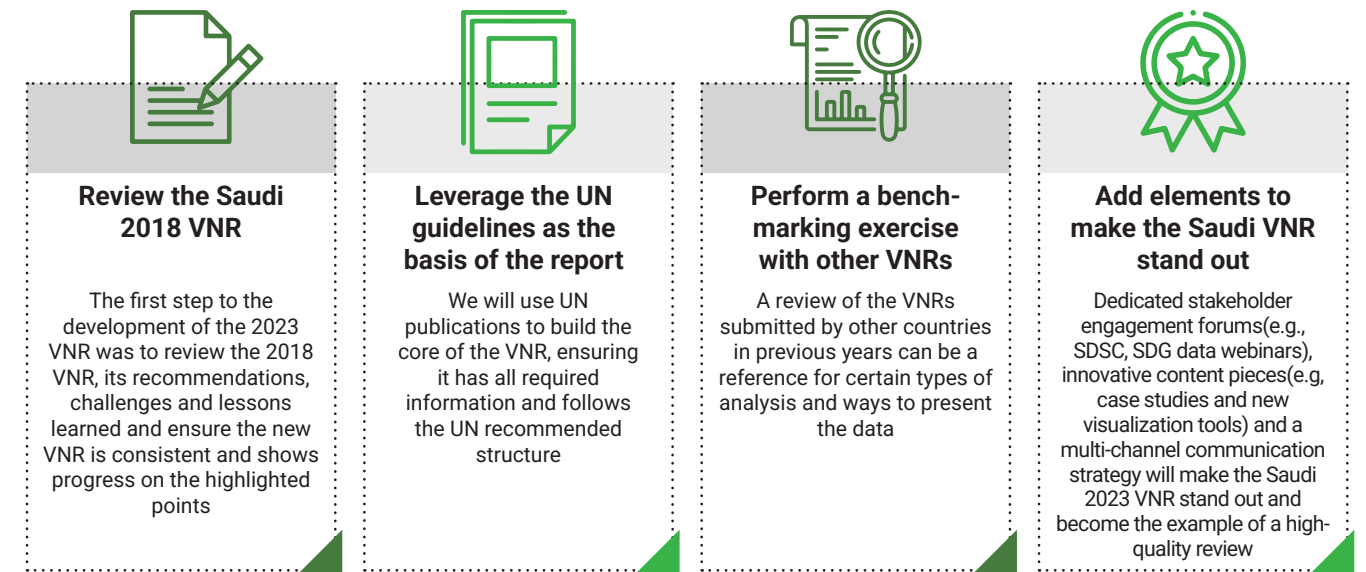


The VLR was developed through a participatory and inclusive process that engaged various stakeholders such as local government, civil society, the private sector, and local communities to assess, monitor, and review the progress of the city towards achieving the SDGs. The VLR presents an analysis of each of the 17 SDG areas and highlights issues that require further attention and additional interventions identified by the working groups. The report's "Means of Implementation" section outlines the "Roadmap for Implementation" that the government has formulated to ensure the achievement of SDG targets. Key issues of importance identified in the AI Madinah VLR are the quality of available data, stakeholder coordination and engagement at national and sub-national level, the institutional framework, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and processes, and the overall strengthening of SDGs at sub-national levels. The VLR also identified important lessons learned throughout the process that are useful for future progress towards advancing the SDGs and in developing future VLRs in AI Madinah and other cities and regions across Saudi Arabia. The VLR is a valuable tool for localizing the SDGs within the city's unique context.

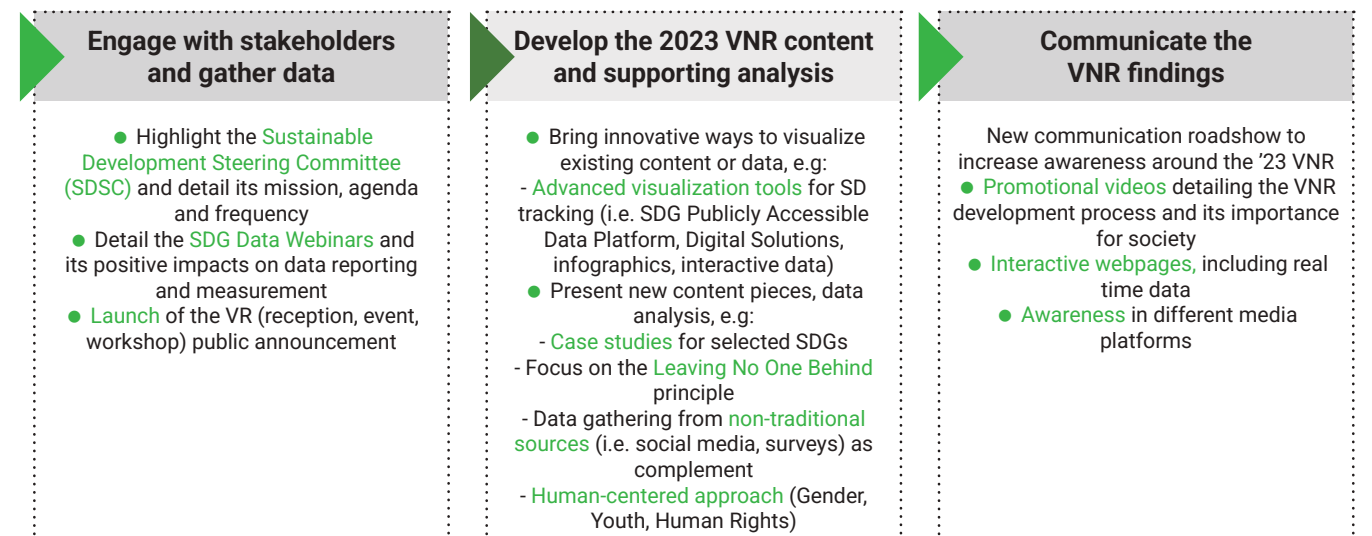
Using the example and experience of AI Madinah, the government will promote the formulation of VLRs in other Saudi regions and cities. By developing their own VLRs, these locations will be able to adapt the SDGs to their local needs. The VLR process will help regional stakeholders to assess, monitor, and review the progress towards achieving the SDGs.

## Process for the Preparation of the VNR

The VNR preparation was developed by the SDSC and supported by MEP, and involved a wide range of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, and research and academic institutions. External partners, such as the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), provided additional support. The preparation of the report involved the steps illustrated below, starting with a review of the 2018 VNRs, leveraging UN guidelines, performing a benchmarking exercise with other VNRs and developing a work plan and stakeholder engagement strategy.



The preparation of the VNR involved the three main steps illustrated in the figure below.



The first step in the process was data collection through stakeholder engagement. Various groups such as government entities, NGOs, private sector companies, and UN agencies were brought together with the aim of gathering information and insights on SDG-related activities in the country. The government focused on including as many stakeholders as possible and leveraging their expertise and experience to collect and analyze of SDG data. The consultative process was open and inclusive. It considered the opinions and viewpoints of all relevant groups. The aim of this inclusion was to give stakeholders a participatory role in preparing the VNR, thereby helping to promote acceptance of the SDGs. The process also stressed the 'Leave No One Behind' principle and adopted a human-centered approach, carefully taking gender, youth, and human rights perspectives into account. Particular attention was dedicated to validating the quality and accuracy of data. Several rounds of consultations



were organized by the VNR team with relevant partners. The VNR team also organized multiple bilateral meetings with stakeholders interested in learning more about the process. To facilitate the data collection process, the VNR team developed a template that was used by 22 government entities to submit SDG-relevant information. In addition, more than 160 “case studies” were submitted for this VNR by about 50 government and non-government entities. These case studies document the actions that these entities have taken to implement the SDGs in their respective areas of work. Selected case studies collected through this process are included in this VNR report; the rest will be placed on the online SDG platform.

The VNR report underwent a validation and review process, in which stakeholders provided feedback for improvement. MEP undertook an awareness raising campaign about the SDGs that entailed the use of various media platforms to ensure the widest possible audience and a lasting impact. The campaign helped raise public awareness of the causes, consequences, and solutions to sustainable development and to encourage individuals and organizations to adopt sustainable practices. Overall, the engagement and data collection process has contributed to ownership, accountability, trust and collaboration among the government, civil society, the private sector, academia, and the general public. It also aided in identifying gaps and innovative solutions for SDG implementation. The information gathered will inform future policy and program development, aligning them with identified needs and priorities.

The VNR preparation process did experience some challenges. Insufficient participation in the SDG data webinars delayed the execution of informational sessions. Additionally, a scarcity of technical expertise and clarity on the SDG methodologies affected the efficiency of data collection and processing. Further, the absence of a single, reliable data center necessitated engagements with various sources to derive the necessary SDG dataset, complicating the VNR development timeline. Despite these challenges, the VNR process was transparent and open, and ensured that the report reflected the views and perspectives of all relevant groups. Furthermore, the VNR process contributed to the prioritization of these challenges by the Saudi government and other SDG stakeholders, ensuring that they remain at the forefront of future efforts to improve the SDG institutional framework in the country. Saudi Arabia has set an ambitious goal to develop four Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) by the year 2030. The expected years for the third and fourth VNRs 2025/2026 and 2030, respectively. All four VNRs will be closely integrated to present a full and coherent picture mapping the country’s overall progress on the sustainable development agenda.

## Stakeholder Engagement in the VNR Process

### Stakeholder Consultation

The government and relevant stakeholders engage in a wide-ranging consultation process to gather information, opinions, and perspectives on progress towards the SDGs. This was through online surveys, public meetings, workshops and focus groups, and other forms of engagement. The consultative process included a wide-reaching public awareness campaign.

### Engagement in Decision-making

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process around the VNR process. This feedback was taken into account in the preparation of the VNR report.

### Validation and Review

The VNR report undergoes a validation and review process, in which the government, stakeholders, and other relevant groups provide feedback and make suggestions for improvement. This process should be transparent and open and should ensure that the report reflects the views and perspectives of all relevant groups.

### Stakeholder Identification

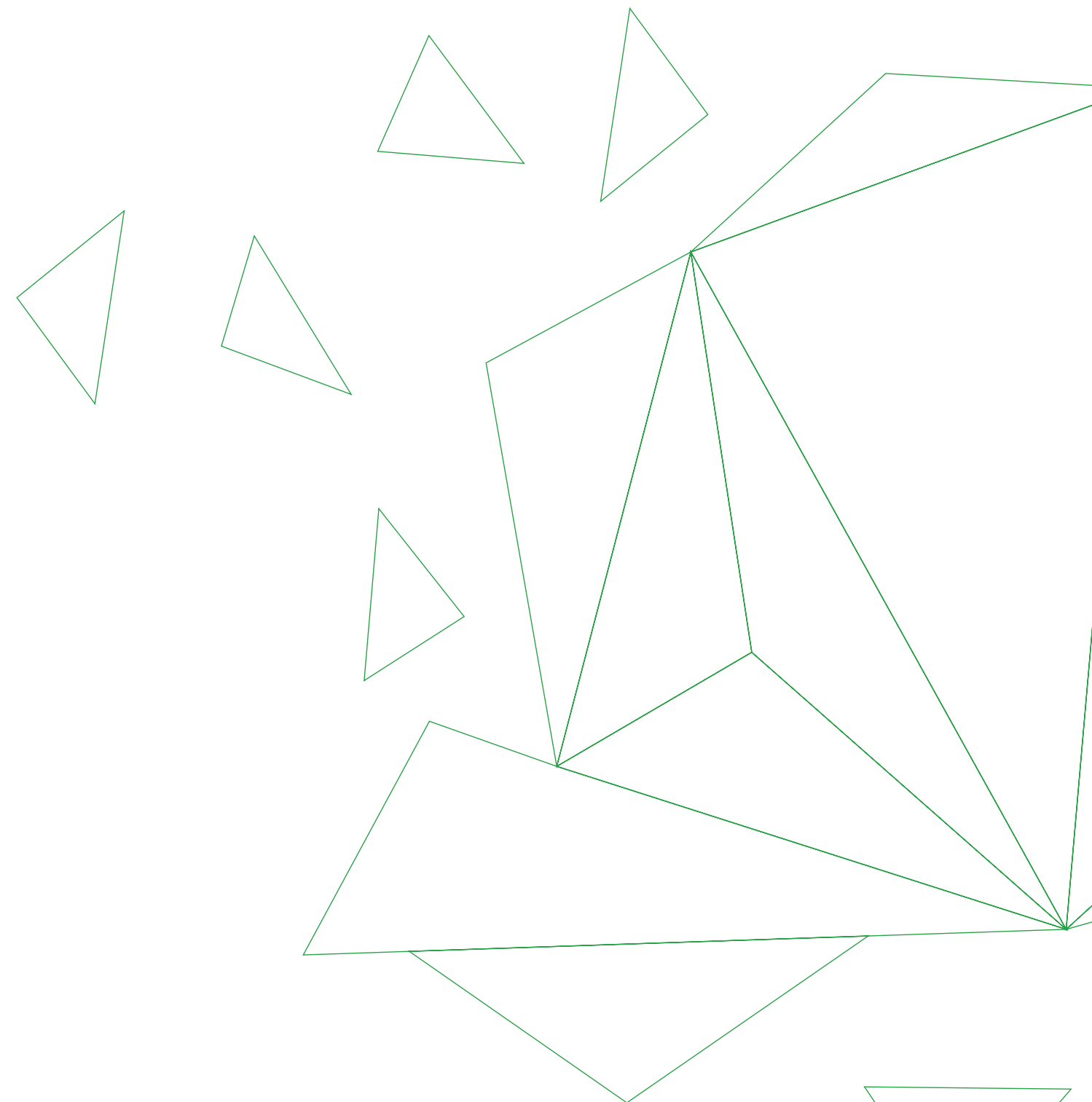
The Ministry of Economy and Planning identified and engaged with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, private sector, academia, and the general public, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Sharing of Information

The government shared information on its progress towards the SDGs with stakeholders, highlighting achievements, challenges, and opportunities for further progress. This information was presented in a transparent and accessible manner to ensure that stakeholders had a clear understanding of the government’s efforts and results

## Data sources

- **GASTAT** provided crucial data on SDG progress.
- **Government agencies** contributed information through consultations, meetings, templates, and case studies.
- **Civil society**, including youth organizations and academia, participated via a survey, written input, and a workshop.
- **Private sector** involvement included an online survey, workshop, and written input from 42 entities.
- **United Nations Country Team (UNCT)** participated through an online survey and dedicated workshop.



# 1 NO POVERTY





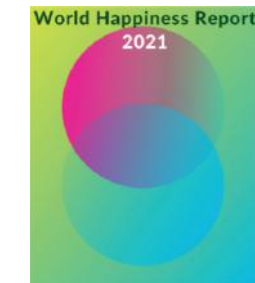


# 1. General Situation

Through a combination of job creation, social protection, economic growth, poverty reduction, and financial inclusion, the government is working to ensure that no one is left behind. Saudi Arabia has made significant progress towards achieving **SDG 1**.

The Kingdom's efforts to eradicate poverty are twofold - within its borders and beyond them. These efforts stem from a sense of moral and humane responsibility and manifest in the Kingdom's humanitarian assistance to the world's developing nations, those most often stricken with poverty and to international organizations battling poverty, in addition to its internal efforts to develop the social services system to be more efficient, accessible, and fair.

## ▶ The Kingdom First on the Happiness Index

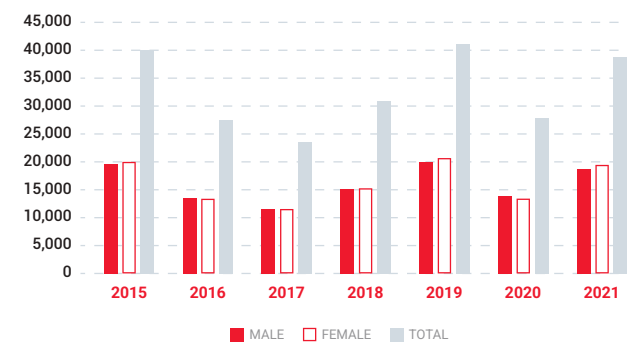


**The Kingdom ranked 1st in the Arab World in the Happiness Index issued by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network for 2021 and ranked 21st globally, which also measured the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on happiness and quality of life globally.**

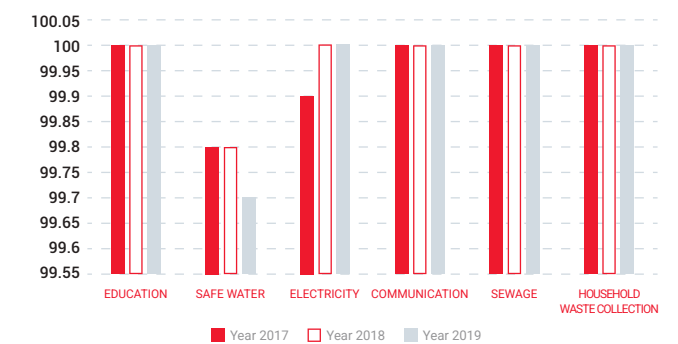
Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in the eradication of poverty. With collaboration and support from the World Bank, MEP has produced poverty headcount rates measured against the international poverty lines of \$2.15 and \$3.65 per day per capita (based on 2017 purchasing power parities). National poverty headcount rates are estimated at 0% (at \$2.15 per day per capita) and 0% (at \$3.65 per day per capita) using household-level expenditures per capita as a welfare aggregate in the survey year 2012/13.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that social protection coverage in Saudi Arabia has experienced fluctuations and variations across different sections of the population. While some groups such as older people and those with disabilities, have seen a considerable increase in coverage, others like people unable to work and unemployed people have experienced a decrease. The SDG data also reveals that female coverage is generally higher than male coverage for most sections of the population. Furthermore, the data demonstrates that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in providing its households with access to basic services such as education, safe water, electricity, communication, sewage, and household waste collection services.

Disabled people and covered by the social protection system



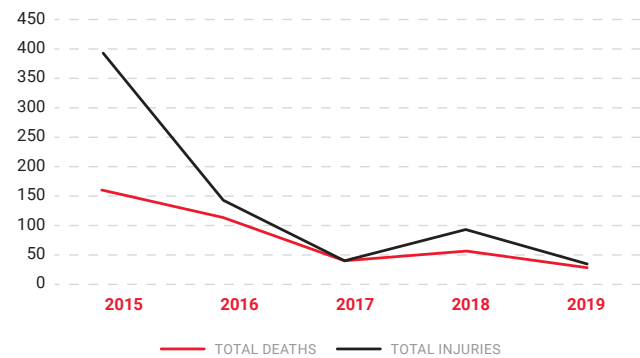
Percent of Households by basic services received



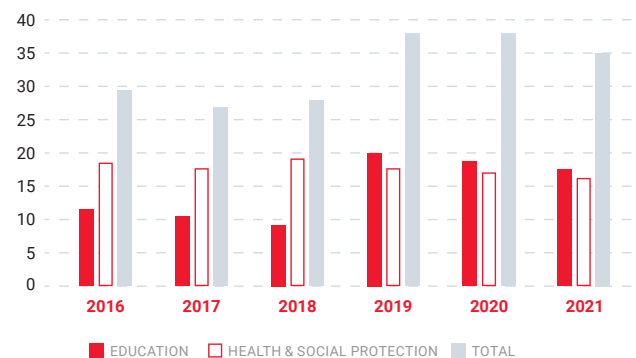
The SDG data from GASTAT shows that Saudi Arabia made progress in reducing the number of deaths and injuries due to disasters from 2015 to 2019.

Also, the proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health, and social protection) shows a general increase over the years. This demonstrates Saudi Arabia's commitment to investing in essential services, which is crucial for addressing poverty, improving health, and ensuring quality education.

Deaths and injuries due disasters per 100,000 population by gender



Government spending on essential services (%)



## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia's policy framework for poverty reduction consists of a set of laws, regulations, and programs that target the root causes of poverty and increase access to resources and opportunities for all. Saudi Arabia's social protection system rests on three pillars shown in the figure to the right, each of which is underpinned by several programs and initiatives.

### Saudi Arabia's Social Protection System

#### SOCIAL INSURANCE PROGRAM

- Social insurance Pension Services:** provides monthly payments to Saudi residents that meet the social insurance system conditions.
- Unemployment Insurance (Sawed):** provides monthly payments to Saudi workers and their families during the period of unemployment for reasons out of their control.

#### SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROGRAM

- Social Security System (Daman):** provides monthly income support to individuals and households based on the status of their existing financial health/income.
- Citizen Account Program:** provides social protection for Saudi families from the expected direct and indirect impact of various economic reforms, which may cause an additional burden on some groups of society.
- Government Subsidies:** provides support for food, fuel, and water.
- Housing Support Programs:** grants lands, housing units, finances, insurance, and homes for orphans, juveniles, the elderly and others.
- Disability Support Programs:** provide supports such as financial aid for the disabled, waving fees for visas, customs, iqamas, exit and re-entry visas, and recruiting domestic help and nurses, vehicle aid.

#### SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR THE LABOR MARKET

- Hafiz - Searching for Employment Program:** provides Employment Support (ES) services, as well as financial assistance of up to SAR 2,000 monthly in order to support and enable the process of job search
- Employment Support Programs:** (TAQAT, wage protection program, etc) to ensure appropriate employee salaries and benefits.

## SDG 1 NO POVERTY: SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM

### SUMMARY

The role of the Saudi Social Protection System is to lay foundations to social security encourage institutions. and individuals to contribute to charitable work. This system contains three components aimed at unassisted families, orphans, those unable to work, people affected by disaster and pandemics, among other groups.

<p><b>Social Insurance Program</b></p> <p><b>Social Insurance pension services</b> providing monthly payments to Saudi residents that meeting the social insurance.</p> <p><b>Unemployment Insurance (SANED)</b> provides cooperative health insurance, retirement and unemployment insurance.</p>	<p><b>Social Safety Net Program</b></p> <p><b>Social security system (Daman)</b> provides monthly income support to individuals and households based on the status of their existing financial health/income.</p> <p><b>Citizen Account Program</b> provides social protection for Saudi families from the expected impact of various economic reforms, which may cause additional burden on some groups of society.</p> <p><b>Government subsidies</b> provides support for food, fuel and water.</p> <p><b>Housing support programs</b> grants land, housing finances, insurance, and homes for orphans, juveniles, elderly and others.</p> <p><b>Disability support programs</b> provide support such as financial aid for the disabled, waving fess for visas, customs, iqamas, and recruiting domestic help and nurses, vehicle aid.</p>	<p><b>Support Programs for the Labor Market</b></p> <p><b>Searching for Employment Program (Hafiz)</b> provides Employment Support services, as well as financial assistance up to SAR 2,000 monthly in order to support and enable job search.</p> <p><b>Employment Support Programs</b> such as TAQAT or Wage Protection Program ensure appropriate employee salaries and benefit.</p>
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### IMPACT

<p>The Kingdom has deposited SAR 100 billion (\$26.6 billion) into the accounts of beneficiaries of its Citizen Account Program since its establishment in 2017</p>	<p>In 2018, Saudi Arabia's King Salman ordered \$5.33 billion an allocation of (\$20 billion) in order to shield citizens from rising living costs</p>	<p>In 2018, Saudi Arabia's King Salman ordered that the total of around \$533.3 million (SAR 2 billion) be paid to those in need for the holy month of Ramadan</p>	<p>Expenditure on social benefits rose by 51% the largest rise from H 1 2020, reaching SAR 42 billion for H 1 2021</p>
<p>Since April 2026, the number of non-profit sector organizations in Saudi Arabia has increased by 164%, reaching more than 3,400 institutions</p>	<p>In 2021, more than 489,000 Saudis have volunteered to support charitable organizations, providing a huge variety of services</p>	<p>More than three million people have benefited from the National Donations platforms since its establishment in April 2020</p>	<p>In 2020, the rate of home ownership reached 62% and will meet the target of 70% by 2030. The Sakani program has helped more than 210,000 Saudi families in 2021, bringing the total number of families benefiting from the Program to 1.2 million</p>

### NEXT STEPS

<p>The government has announced to expand the coverage of the Tawafuq cash transfer program that provides financial support to low- income households</p>	<p>The government has announced plans to expand Wusool program, a subsidy program that provides financial support students in higher education</p>	<p>The Social Safety Net Program will continue to support Saudi citizens with income support, housing support and food, fuel and water subsidies, extending protection to the disabled</p>	<p>The support programs to the labor market will continue to assist Saudi citizens search for employment, as well as offering benefits of the Employment Support programs</p>
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Saudi Arabia has launched a social protection reform agenda encompassing revised beneficiary criteria, adjusted benefit amounts, and efforts to reduce subsidies on water, electricity, and food, in addition to implementing a value added tax. At the same time, the government has improved the targeting of social safety nets for the most vulnerable populations and has launched several initiatives aimed at accelerating job creation and improving access to social services. In particular, the government has launched a number of employment programs to create job opportunities for youth and women. The following are some key examples of these initiatives:

## ▶ ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE

### ZAKAT Program

Offers assistance to vulnerable individuals, including the poor, widows, orphans, and others in need. Collected funds are utilized for social welfare initiatives, delivering food, housing, and medical care to the underprivileged. Additionally, the government allocates Zakat funds for charitable endeavors like supporting education and offering job training for the unemployed.

### Waqfy Platform

Facilitates contributions from community groups and donors towards sustainable development needs, thereby bolstering the financial sustainability of the non-profit sector.

### Licensing of Social Workers

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) has launched a major reform on the licensing of social workers aimed at professionalizing the field of social work.

### Social Development Bank (SDB)

Provides financial products and services such as microfinance loans, housing loans, and business financing to low-income families, SMEs, and non-profits. SDB also facilitates the implementation of social and economic development initiatives.

### National Program for Community Development "Tanmia"

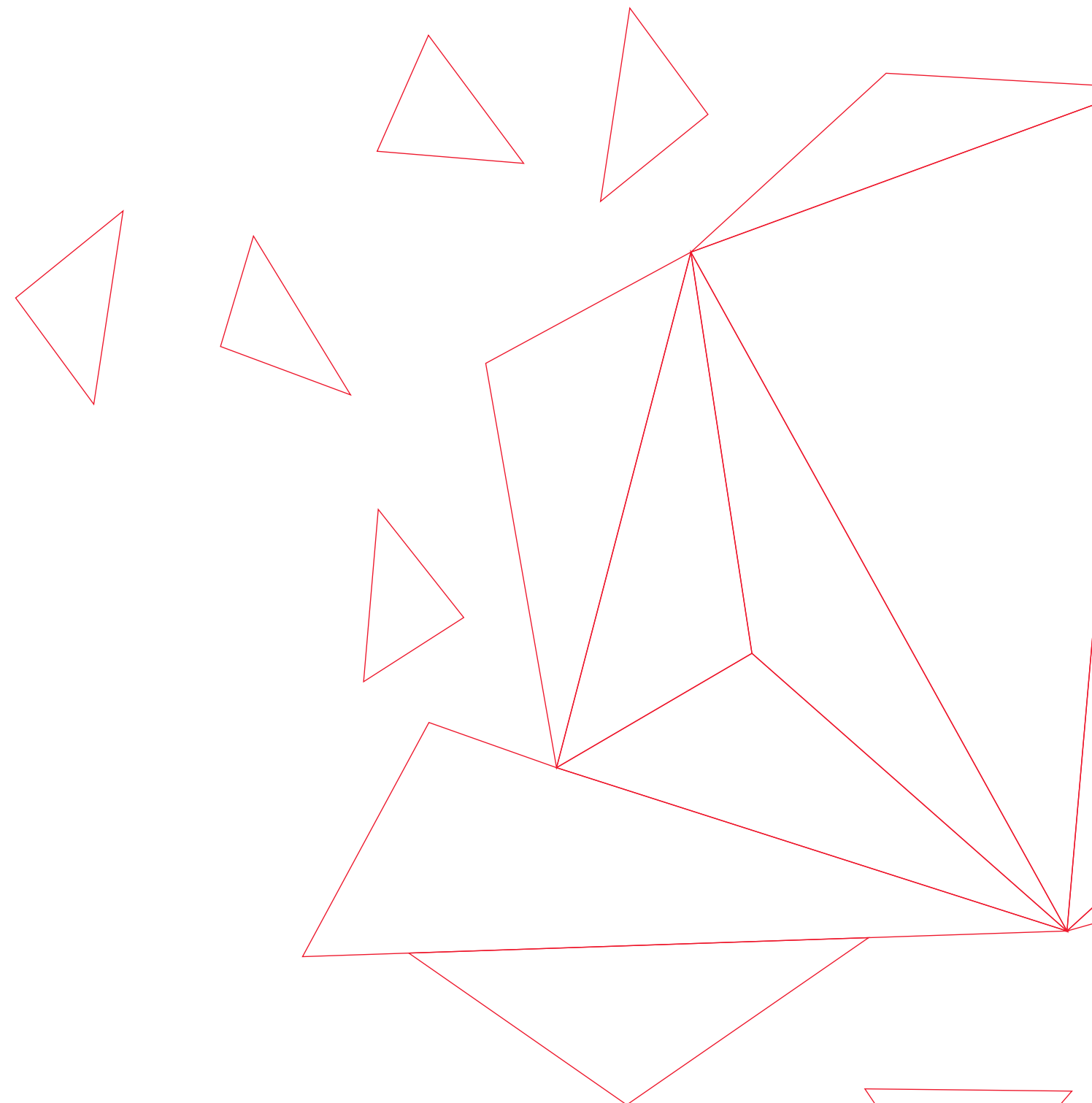
Provides funding and support for initiatives proposed and implemented by local communities with the goal of promoting community engagement and self-sufficiency. Tanmia addresses community challenges such as unemployment and limited access to basic services.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Going forward, the government will further its efforts on social inclusion. The focus will be on enhancing the accessibility of social services by targeting untapped regions and communities, as well as on fostering financial inclusion through increased access to financial services and promoting digital solutions for low-income and rural populations.

The following actions will be prioritized to promote inclusive development:

- **Financial inclusion:** Encourage financial inclusion by increasing access to financial services and promoting digital financial services, especially for low-income and rural populations.
- **Human capital development:** Invest in human capital development such as education and skills training to improve labor market outcomes and increase economic growth.
- **Agricultural and Rural development:** Promote rural development, including small-scale farming, and create job opportunities in rural areas.





# 2 ZERO HUNGER





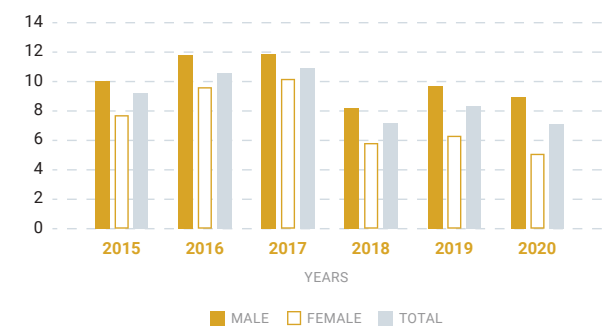


# 1. General Situation

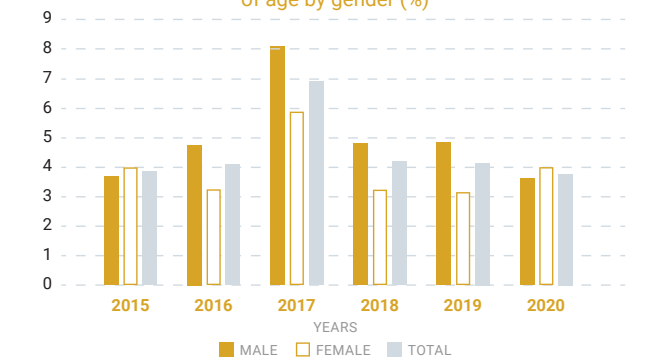
Saudi Arabia is one of the largest contributors to programs for eradicating hunger. The government is continuously enhancing food security by improving productivity and optimizing the efficiency of resource utilization. The government has implemented a food security strategy aimed at ensuring stable food supplies, improving agricultural productivity, and reducing food waste. The government has also promoted investment and technological advancements in the agricultural sector, with a focus on increasing efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age in Saudi Arabia has been decreasing in recent years. Stunting rates for both genders have generally followed the same trend, with an increase from 2015 to 2017 and a decrease thereafter. The rate of decrease has been more pronounced for female children, particularly between 2017 and 2018. Also, the SDG data shows that the prevalence of malnutrition (wasting) among children under 5 years of age in Saudi Arabia has been decreasing since 2017, particularly among male children. The overall prevalence decreased from 7% in 2017 to 4.1% in 2018 and 2019 and fell further to 3.8% in 2020.

Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age (%)

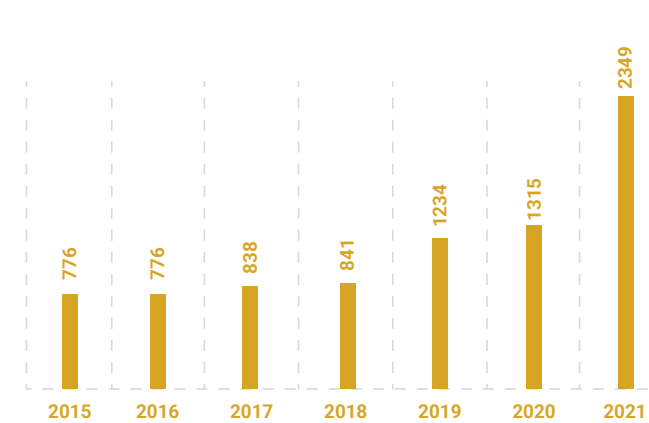


Prevalence of malnutrition (wasting) among children under 5 years of age by gender (%)

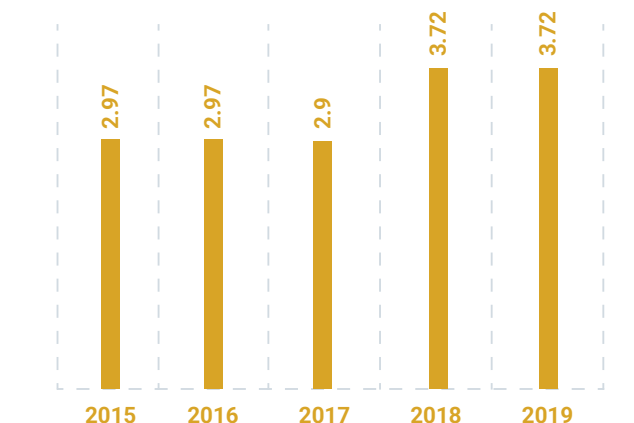


Saudi Arabia is making progress in sustainable agriculture, food security, and biodiversity by securing and preserving genetic resources. SDG data in the figure below shows, the steady growth of the number of plant genetic resources. The data also indicates an increase in the proportion of local breeds at risk of extinction. The increase in the percentage of local breeds at risk of extinction suggests that more efforts are needed to preserve and secure these resources, which are essential for sustainable agriculture, food security, and biodiversity conservation.

Number of plant genetic resources



Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction

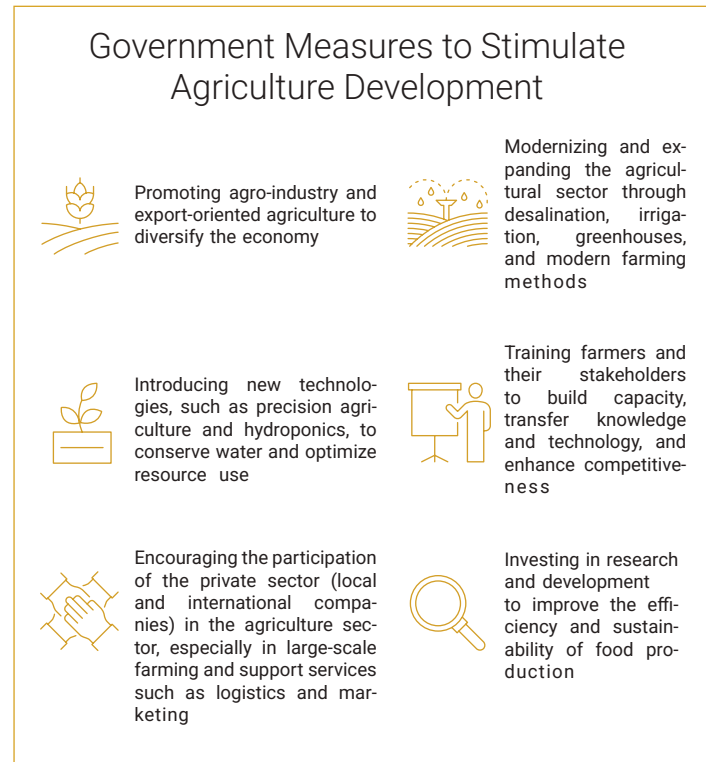




## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

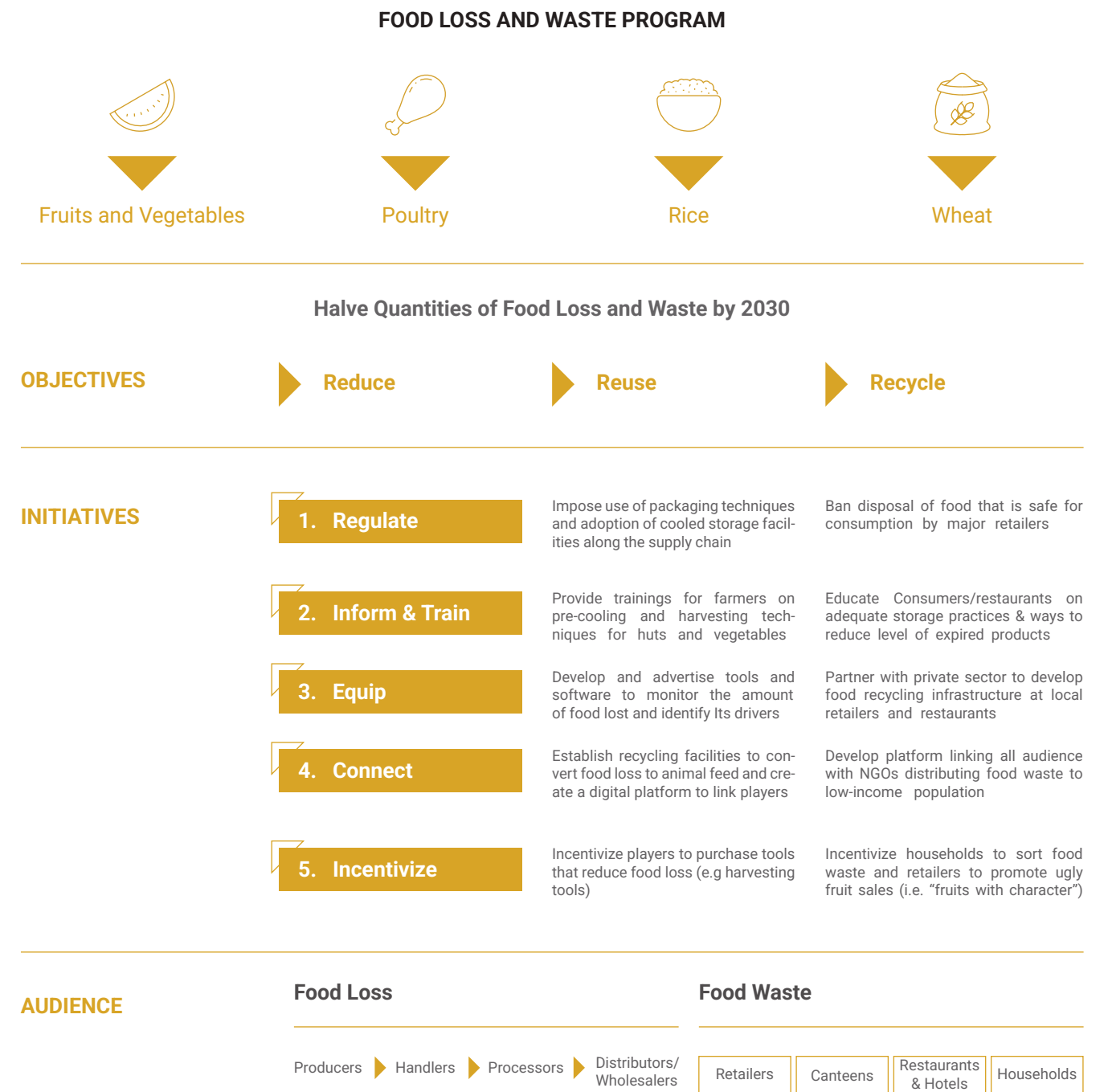
Due to Saudi Arabia being dependent on imports for its food supply, rising global food prices, coupled with population growth and urbanization, have put pressure on the country's food security. In response to these challenges, the government has prioritized food security. These include efforts to increase agricultural production, particularly in fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, improve the productivity of existing agricultural land, develop new farmland reduce waste, and promote more efficient and sustainable food systems. Certain growing methods, such as aquaculture, water-efficient agriculture technologies (hydroponics), or alternative proteins, are on the rise.

The government is diversifying food sources and reducing dependency on imports. Saudi Arabia is the second largest global packaged food market within MENA (around ~SAR 74 billion). This market is growing at 5% per annum, driven by a young and increasingly active population, more economical private labels, and healthier product offerings. The government has implemented food safety regulations to ensure the quality of imported and domestically produced food. Another key aspect of Saudi Arabia's food security strategy is the promotion of food conservation and waste reduction. The government has promoted the reduction of food waste through the efficient storage and distribution of food. This includes initiatives to increase the efficiency of food supply chains and promote better food labeling and consumer education.



## Food loss and waste program increases efficiency and sustainability of domestic production and consumption through diverse initiatives

non-exhaustive





Saudi Arabia has established a range of institutions in support of the development of the agriculture sector and food security. The following are some key examples:

## KEY INSTITUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

### Agricultural Development Fund

Finances agricultural projects, including modern farming techniques and the construction of new irrigation systems.

### General Food Security Authority (GFSA)

Oversees the implementation of the Food Security Strategy, which includes 11 programs such as Sustainable Agriculture, Food Loss and Waste Reduction, and Strategic Reserves. Furthermore, GFSA has been instrumental in coordinating effective responses to global food crises and initiating programs like the “National Program to Reduce Food Loss and Waste”.

### Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Company (SALIC)

Invests in local and international agricultural and trade partnerships for grains, rice, and meat, as well as agricultural technologies that promote water conservation, production efficiency, and environmental protection.

### Center for Desert Agriculture at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)

Is dedicated to the study, engineering, and implementation of sustainable agriculture in extreme environments and focuses on research topics such as crop improvement, water management, and sustainable agriculture practices.

### National Research and Development Center for Sustainable Agriculture (ESTIDAMAH)

Performs applied research to adopt and test innovative technologies that contribute to sustainable agriculture, with a primary focus on increasing crop production per unit area, boosting water-use efficiency, and applying modern cultivation technologies.

### Saudi Irrigation Organization (SIO)

Is responsible for managing and developing the country’s irrigation systems. SIO was established with the goal of improving water management, ensuring efficient use of water resources, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The following are some key ongoing initiatives in the area of agriculture and food security:

## KEY ONGOING INITIATIVES

### Agriculture Development

**Sustainable Agricultural Rural Development Programme (REEF)** provides small agricultural producers, cooperative societies, and rural establishments with resources, services, and access to markets. Additionally, it provides communities with easy access to safe and healthy food, facilitates women’s participation in the labor market, and preserves the environment and natural resources.

**Management of Pesticides:** The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture has implemented a legal requirement for obtaining a permit to export agricultural pesticides, ensuring proper management and control of its trade.

### Food Security

**Strategy for Healthy Food:** Launched by the Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA), the strategy is aimed at reducing the levels of sugar, salt, and saturated and transformed fats in food products, which are major causes of being overweight. The strategy has fostered voluntary commitment agreements from several large private sector companies. Restaurants and cafes have introduced information about food calorie levels in their menus.

**Dietary Policies:** The Ministry of Health has issued food-based dietary guidelines for citizens, including “The Dietary Guideline” and “Healthy Food Proportions”, available on its website. Restaurants, food suppliers, and manufacturers are now required to display nutritional information on products, helping consumers understand their components and nutritional value. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education have partnered in the Rashaqa program to reduce obesity among school-aged children. The “Quality of Life- Program” (under Vision 2030) has targeted obesity by promoting increased participation in sports and athletic activities.

**Food Loss & Waste Index:** GFSA is working to reduce food loss and waste in the Kingdom by evaluating and analyzing the Kingdom’s Food Loss & Waste Index, which measures food loss and waste throughout the value chain.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The main challenges in this area that will receive continued attention include limited arable land and water resources, dependence on food imports leading to vulnerability to fluctuations in global food prices and supply disruptions, a rapidly growing population, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on supply chain disruptions and increased food prices.

Prioritized actions for this area include updating the current food security strategy, enhancing sector governance and institutional setup, revising legislations, and improving Saudi Arabia’s ranking on food security indices.

# Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development Programme

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

The aim of the SRAD is to contribute to the achievement of balanced social and economic development while improving the efficiency and sustainable exploitation of the renewable agricultural and aquatic natural resources.

- ▶ Boost sustainable transformation by moving away from upstream-price-differential-linked subsidies for farmers
- ▶ Development of rural communities at large (including rural women and youth)
- ▶ Technical and financial assistance
- ▶ Implemented with FAO support
- ▶ Value addition for products by small scale producers
- ▶ Program to run from 2022 to 2026

### Specific interventions include:



50% increase in small farmers' output



=30 thousand additional Jobs in agriculture



Advanced farming technologies by 1000 farmers



Water use efficiency improved by 50% in crop production and rainwater harvest sites



Rehabilitating land resources



Incubation for 50 small scale enterprises

### IMPACT



Trainings and Workshops attended by =1500 participants



60 published diagnostic studies, handbooks, manuals, and reviews



1000 hectare terraces rehabilitated and rainwater harvesting techniques applied



Initiative for Rural Women Empowerment "WARFA" launched on the occasion of International Rural Women's Day



Digital Fisheries Statistic System adopted my MEWA fisheries branches





A mobile-based precision livestock's farm management application was designed



Digital fish auction framework



Partnerships established with   



E-Agricultural Market information System in the early stage of development



Subsidizing >10 thousand small farmers and beekeepers, and >30,000 productive rural families



Increased visibility of smallholders, their products and activities through 20 national and local festivals



32 technologies and good practices identified, piloted, and promoted for which 109 potential sites were identified and 30 new ones were established in 2022

### NEXT STEPS

The program, along with its 600 activities and 38 outputs will continue as planned and be scaled up according to the methodology aligned with FAO. It is expected to expand to a wider range of products, to cover more farmers, including rural youth and women.

Scale-Up

FAO-Compliant Methodology

Wider Range of Products

More Farmers

Rural Youth & Women

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING







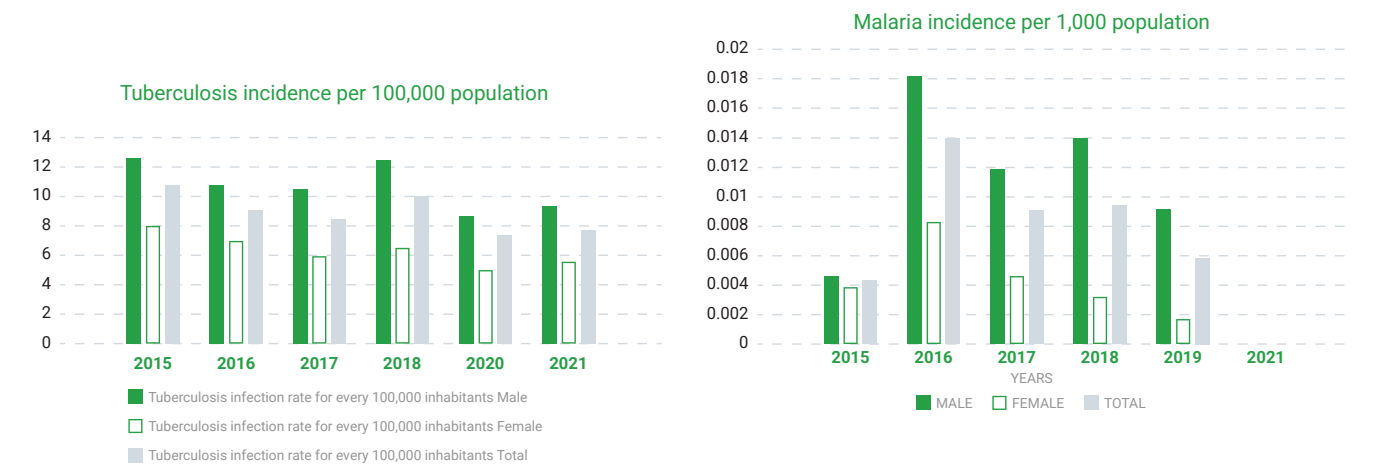
# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has undertaken crucial measures to streamline access and enhance the quality and efficiency of healthcare services. The government has made substantial investments, particularly in promoting preventive measures for health risks. Additionally, various initiatives have been implemented to improve traffic safety and educate the public about healthy lifestyles.

The Saudi government has made health a priority, reflected in increased budgetary allocations and improved health indicators. The focus has been on non-communicable diseases and a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A top priority, the sector has consistently been one of the largest recipients of government expenditures accounting for 17.7% in 2021, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, was expected to reach 14.5% in 2022.<sup>4</sup>

The Kingdom's wasting prevalence of 4.4% in 2020 is lower than the global average and the regional (Middle East and North Africa) average. This indicates better performance in addressing malnutrition in comparison to other countries. Also, Saudi Arabia's stunting prevalence of 12.4% in 2022 is lower than the global and regional (Middle East and North Africa) averages from 2021.

Since 2015, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel has been stable and has remained above 98%. The consistently high proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel indicates that the country has good access to quality healthcare during childbirth, which is essential for the health and safety of both mothers and newborns. During this period, the maternal mortality ratio has been low (about 12 per 100,000) compared to global averages, indicating a relatively low risk for maternal deaths in the country. The under-five mortality rate has remained below 9 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is low compared to global averages. In the same period, infant and child mortality rates have declined, due in part to the effectiveness of the immunization program and reduced transmission of communicable diseases.



The SDG data from GASTAT indicates that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in reducing the tuberculosis incidence rate from 11 per 100,000 2015 to under 8 2021.

Throughout the years, the tuberculosis infection rate has consistently been higher among males compared to females. The data also shows that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in reducing the malaria incidence rate from 2015 to 2021, with both males and females experiencing a decline in incidence rates. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has made progress in reducing the hepatitis B incidence rate from 2015 to 2021. Both males and females genders experienced a significant decline in hepatitis B incidence by 2021, with males at 0.88 and females at 0.68 per 100,000.

<sup>4</sup> Document available at [www.mof.gov.sa](http://www.mof.gov.sa).

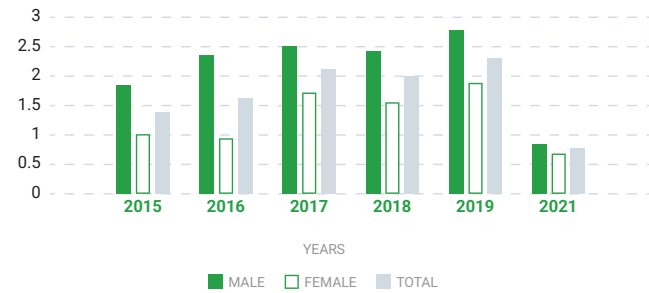


## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

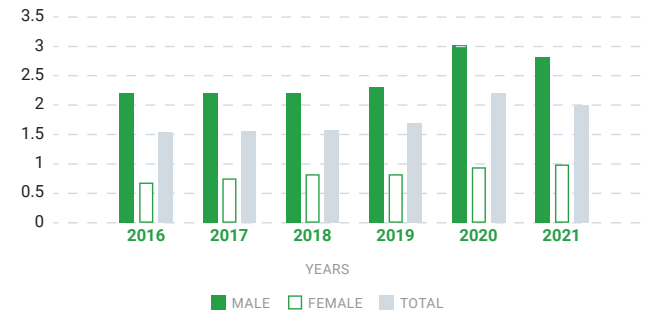
Saudi Arabia's health policy framework is underpinned by the Healthcare Law and the National Health Strategy. The Healthcare Law provides for comprehensive and accessible healthcare services to the whole population. The National Health Strategy outlines the vision, goals, and objectives for the development of the health sector. Key priorities include the development of a national health information system, improvement of primary healthcare services, expansion of public-private partnerships, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiative was launched in 2017 to prioritize the population's health in all policies and regulations. Furthermore, the Health Sector Transformation Program was launched under the Vision 2030 in 2021 and is aimed at restructuring the health sector into a comprehensive, effective and integrated health system based on the health of the individual and society. An array of policies and programs have been established by the Saudi government (outlined in the figure below).



Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population by gender

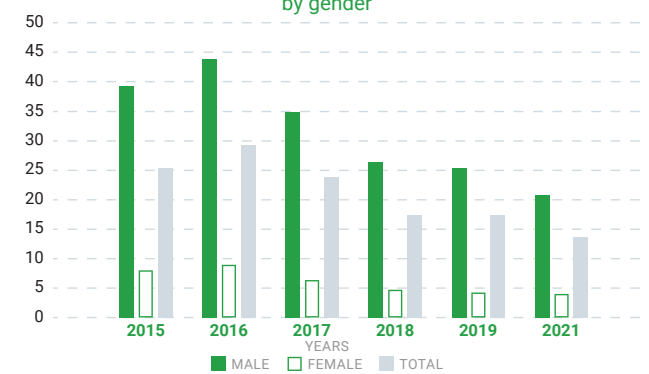


Number of suicide mortality per 100,000 persons by gender

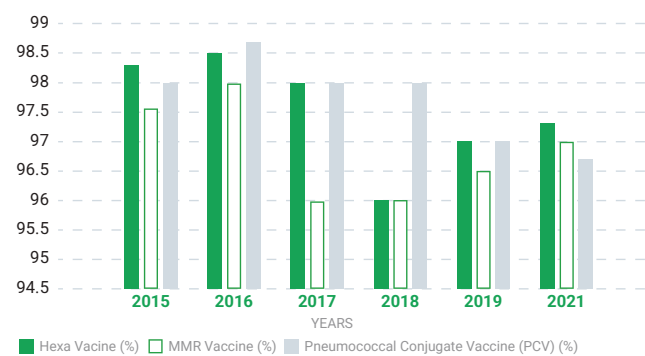


The SDG data from GASTAT also shows full coverage (100%) for substance use disorders for both males and females between 2015 and 2021. This suggests that the country has been successful in maintaining access to treatment interventions for the population. The data also shows a significant reduction in road traffic fatalities for both genders from 2015 to 2021. This trend suggests that road safety measures have been effective in reducing the number of fatalities. The SDG data indicates that Saudi Arabia has maintained a high and stable vaccination coverage rate for Hexa, MMR, and PCV vaccines from 2015 to 2021. While there have been minor fluctuations in the coverage percentages over the years, the overall trend demonstrates a strong commitment to immunization.

Number of deaths due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population by gender



Population covered by all vaccine



The SDG data indicates improvements in TB treatment success, consistently high coverage of DTP vaccination, and significant progress in providing antiretroviral therapy to people living with HIV in Saudi Arabia. However, more data is needed to analyze trends in fasting plasma glucose levels and smoking prevalence among adults. Antenatal care data only covers one year, so it is not possible to analyze trends or changes in the coverage of antenatal care services over time. Hospital bed data a stable proportion of hospital beds per 10,000 population over the years.

The following are some additional initiatives that have been launched by the Saudi government in the healthcare sector:

**Mother and Child Health:** Mother and child health have seen significant improvements in recent years. Infant and child mortality rates have declined. These results have been enabled by, the immunization program and reduced transmission of communicable diseases among children. Maternal health has improved with a decrease in the maternal mortality ratio. Almost all deliveries are now attended by trained personnel. An increasing

### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

SAUDI ARABIA'S GOVERNMENT HAS PURSUED SEVERAL KEY PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES AIMED AT IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES.

Launched initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for the elderly, including increasing access to health care services and improving access to social services.

Improved the accessibility of healthcare services for people with disabilities including the creation of specialized healthcare facilities and the development of assistive technologies to improve the delivery of health services to this population.

Promoted telemedicine and digital health solutions to improve access to health care services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

number of women of reproductive age had their family planning needs met with modern methods. The Ministry of Health has introduced the Breast Cancer Early Detection program to reduce breast cancer mortality and increase early detection. Additionally, the Early Childhood Development policy covers a comprehensive range of aspects, including health, nutrition, breastfeeding, vaccination, early detection of developmental delays, and services to strengthen young children's development. The policy also focuses on parenting, responsive care, and support for caretakers to provide the best possible care in a safe, secure, and stimulating environment for development.

**Communicable Diseases:** Saudi Arabia is working to combat communicable diseases, with specific goals to end tuberculosis by 2035 and eliminate Hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030.

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) has allocated substantial resources to the National Tuberculosis Control Program, which reported 1,970 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis in 2021. To address latent tuberculosis, the program launched a project to detect and treat high-risk groups, resulting in over 54,000 individuals screened and nearly 2,800 positive cases treated.
- In line with the World Health Organization's global targets, Saudi Arabia is also striving to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2030. The MOH reported 1,960 cases of Hepatitis C virus (HCV) in 2021. The country has implemented a project for HCV elimination that focuses on enhanced detection through integrated screening for the whole population and high-risk groups. As a result, over 13 million individuals were screened, with more than 6,500 cases identified and treated. The new class of medications has revolutionized HCV management, offering a cure rate of over 90% and preventing complications and transmission. The following in-depth case provides more information.

**Non Communicable Diseases:** As Saudi Arabia's population ages, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases is expected to rise, increasing the demand for costlier healthcare services. NCDs currently account for 73.2% of deaths in the country, with cardiovascular disease being the leading cause. The Saudi government is committed to addressing the rising issue of unhealthy lifestyles and has initiated several prevention activities targeting tobacco use, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity.

- In 2018, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) developed a healthy food strategy to enhance healthy lifestyles and reduce the intake of salt, sugar, and saturated and trans fatty acids. This strategy, along with other nutrition policies, aims to empower consumers and create a healthier food environment to combat NCDs.
- The Quality of Life Program's Lively Community initiative encourages citizens to participate in physical activities, supports sports groups and federations, and promotes women's participation in community sports.
- The National Tobacco Control Committee (NCTC), established in 2007, supervises the implementation of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control MPOWER<sup>5</sup> policies. Saudi Arabia has achieved a high level of implementation, with best practices in offering help to quit smoking, warning about tobacco dangers, and enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. The country was the first in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to implement plain packaging<sup>6</sup> for tobacco products in 2019 and has established a WHO collaboration center for plain packaging. Additionally, the number of tobacco cessation clinics has increased, and virtual cessation services have been established to facilitate access to therapeutic services and integrate these clinics with other healthcare providers.

<sup>5</sup> MPOWER comprises a set of six cost-effective and high-impact measures that help countries reduce demand for tobacco. More information can be found here: <https://www.emro.who.int/tfi/mpower/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Plain packaging of tobacco is a common-sense policy that removes the promotional, marketing, and advertising features on packs of tobacco, but leaves the health warnings, tax stamps, and other features required by government.


## SDG 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

### Screening to Identify and Treat Hepatitis C Across the Kingdom

## IN-DEPTH CASE


#### SUMMARY


In 2018, the Kingdom launched a project focusing on enhancing detection of the HCV virus through integrated screening of the entire population, with priority, to vulnerable groups. The project included training an adequate number of staff and improving facilities to fight the virus.


 1,960 cases of Hepatitis C reported in 2021

 The goal was set to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030.

#### IMPACT


 Since the health vscreenings began in 2018, over 9M people had been screened and 90,000 diagnosed with Hepatitis C, then received treatment.


 The impact of this project has been enormous, having potential to avert tens of thousands of deaths, through early screening and the projected elimination of the disease.

 Transmission of Hepatitis C from migrant workers or during the visits of large number of pilgrims to holy sites in Mecca and Medina shape additional challenge in control and prevention.

**Challenge**

#### NEXT STEPS

 The goal is to reach the SDG target and eliminate the virus.

 The campaign will raise awareness about the importance of screening and treatment among the general population.



**Road Traffic Safety:** Road traffic accidents (RTAs) have been a significant challenge, resulting in high mortality and injury rates. The Kingdom aims to reduce road traffic fatalities to less than 8 per 100,000 by 2030, as well as to minimize related injuries and losses. In 2017, the Saudi government established the Ministerial Committee of Traffic Safety (MCTS) to oversee the implementation of the national Road Safety Strategy and collaborate with relevant stakeholders. The National Center for Road Safety was founded in 2018 to further improve road safety. Other key initiatives include the establishment of the Saher Automated System by the Ministry of Interior, a road safety training program, and the development of the National Transport & Logistics Strategy to position Saudi Arabia among the most advanced countries in terms of road quality and safety. These measures have contributed to the reduction of the number of fatalities in the last five years (see SDG data above).

**Research and Infrastructure Development:** Saudi Arabia is investing in research and infrastructure development to improve its healthcare sector. The Health Research Center was established to elevate health research, while the National Research Centers focus on infectious and non-communicable diseases and epidemics. Under Vision 2030, the government plans to invest over \$65 billion in healthcare infrastructure and aims to increase private sector contributions, targeting the privatization of numerous hospitals and primary health centers.

The National Unified Procurement Company (NUPCO) is responsible for procuring and delivering pharmaceutical supplies and medical devices, striving to enhance government spending efficiency by investing in logistics, digital infrastructure, and localizing pharmaceutical industries. NUPCO played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic and has launched various health services projects, including a state-of-the-art medicine storage and distribution center in partnership with King Abdullah Economic City. The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) is implementing the Saudi Genome Program, which aims to reduce genetic disease incidence using advanced genomic technologies, leading to improved healthcare provision, personalized medicine, cost reduction, and enhanced quality of life while positioning the Kingdom as a global leader in genomics research and AI-driven personalized medicine.

## Success Stories



الجينوم السعودي  
SAUDI GENOME

**KACST success stories**

TITLE

The Saudi Genome Program.

PROBLEM

A 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> year old girl was diagnosed with a brain tumor (glioblastoma) that was removed successfully through surgery, however it then grew again after 3 months. The family denied standard therapy (memo and radiation).

SOLUTION

A sample of the removed tumor was sent to the lab for genomic profiling in the Saudi Genome program labs. The results showed a genetic alteration that causes continuous activation of a specific protein, which caused the tumor to grow again. Luckily, a drug was available that inhibited the genetic mutation found in the sample.

RESULTS

Access to the drug was granted and the patient received the treatment. It was very well tolerated with excellent results.

IMPACT

This is a successful application of personalized medicine and a true example of the power of genomic testing, where the drug is selected based on the patient's genomic profile. Conventional treatment would have been another surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, which have many side effects and may not have been very successful in this particular instance.

**Digitalization:** The Ministry of Health is undertaking an ambitious program to digitalize healthcare, with over 500 health centers and hospitals already connected to the electronic system. Initiatives include the SEHA Virtual Hospital, which supports 130 hospitals and provides over 30 specialized services, and the creation of Virtual Clinics accessible through the Sehhaty app. The government has invested significantly in technology and digital health infrastructure, ensuring all health information systems are fully electronic. The SEHA virtual hospital is among the largest worldwide, with real-time monitoring of health sector indicators for timely decision-making and emergency response.

## Facilitated access to healthcare through technology and innovation



**Sehha App:** Enhancing public health by providing remote medical and preventive care to users. Sehha was launched in March 2017 and provided around 2.1 million consultations to 16 million users by 2020.



**Mawid App:** Launched in April 2018 to help users book, reschedule. Modify or cancel appointments at primary health care centers. Around 14.3 million beneficiaries booked more than 67 million appointments by the end of 2020.



**Wasfaty Service:** Links hospitals and primary healthcare centers with community pharmacies. Thereby avoiding medical errors resulting from written prescriptions and making medicines available at any time. The service reduces dispensing frequency and offers automatic identification of any medicines which may trigger a patient's allergies. Around 8.4 million prescriptions were provided through the service by August 2020.



**Sehhaty App:** Launched in August 2019. The app was used extensively during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing appointments for corona virus testing, vaccinations and health information. It had over 1.2 million users by 2020.



**The Tabaud App (COVID-19 social distancing):** Launched in 2020, the app was created to protect citizens and residents from the spread of COVID-19. Tabaud complements the Tawakkalna app. It uses Bluetooth to inform users that they have been in contact with continued cases of COVID-19 whilst maintaining users' privacy. Key achievements over the period from launch in June 2020 until the end of 2020:

- 3rd country worldwide to launch an app that informs users of contact
- 30K+ notifications of positive diagnosis
- 3+ million users

The government has made significant investments in technology and digital health infrastructure. E-health and electronic transformation involve all aspects of health planning, administration and provision. All health information systems have become fully electronic. The SEHA virtual hospital is the largest in the region and among the largest in the world with over 35 specialties. Real time monitoring of indicators of all aspects of the health sector allows timely decision making and response to emergencies. And with the beginning of 2023, implementation of electronic medical records will be introduced.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Key areas for attention include addressing the increasing burden of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, controlling and preventing the spread of tuberculosis and Hepatitis C transmission from migrant workers and pilgrims, and mitigating the impact of rapid urban growth and public transportation on traffic deaths and injuries. Additionally, adapting to digital health services requires cultural and behavioral transformations among health providers and beneficiaries, as well as improved data management and infrastructure readiness. Lastly, combating child obesity, which has long-term physical and mental health consequences, is crucial for curbing the rise of non-communicable diseases.

The following are key actions for this SDG area:

- The Ministry of Health aims to screen 100% of high-risk individuals living in the country at least once in their lifetime for latent tuberculosis and Hepatitis C.
- The SEHA virtual hospital plans to expand its capacity by 20% to provide more specialty services and support facilities in peripheral areas.
- Continued emphasis will be placed on early childhood development, including early detection and intervention for children with disabilities.
- The Ministry of Transport and Logistics Services is leading the development and enforcement of the Saudi Road Code, which is expected to be launched by 2024. The road code aims to achieve the highest levels of safety, security, quality, economic efficiency, environmental protection, and sustainability.
- Saudi Arabia will continue to provide assistance in the area of healthcare to low- and middle-income countries and contribute to sustainable development globally.

# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION







# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has made progress in expanding access to education and improving the quality of education, particularly for girls. The government has launched several initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education and increasing literacy rates by modernizing the education system, establishing new universities and developing new curricula.

The modernization of Saudi Arabia's education system and the upskilling of the Saudi population are vital for the country's economic transformation. To ensure that Saudi youth are "equipped for the jobs of the future" in a knowledge-based economy, the government is pursuing far-reaching education reforms, including rolling out modernized school curricula that emphasize critical thinking, re-training teachers, and constructing of new schools, as well as the decentralization of Saudi Arabia's school system. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in education and has achieved notable progress in improving its education sector in recent years. In 2021, Saudi Arabia invested roughly 8.3% of its GDP in education, which is well above UNESCO's recommendation of 4-6%.<sup>5</sup>

## Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests

The Kingdom ranked 2nd among the G20 countries for progress in TIMSS test scores for 2015 - 2019. It was the **2nd most improved country** in science and mathematics for Grade 4, and was the most improved country in science and mathematics for Grade 8.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that Saudi Arabia has consistently provided a 100% availability of essential services in primary, preparatory, and secondary schools from 2015 to 2021.

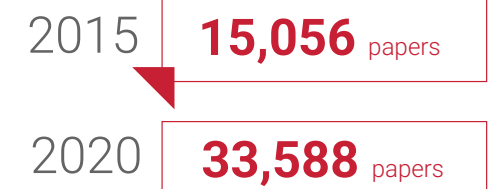
This reflects the country's commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment for all students, ensuring that they have access to the necessary resources and facilities to achieve quality education.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that completion rates were high for primary and preparatory education in Saudi Arabia in 2017, with slight gender gaps in favor of female students in primary education and male students in preparatory education. In the age group 15+, the participation rate in formal and informal education was 62.3% for males and 63.4% for females, resulting in a total of 62.9%. This indicates that a majority of individuals aged 15 and older participated in some form of education, either formal or informal. The data also reveals a slight gender gap in favor of women. In the age group 15-24, the participation rate in formal and informal education was lower, with 17.4% for males and 18.5% for females, resulting in a total of 17.8%. The data also shows a small gender gap in favor of women.

SDG data from GASTAT for 2021 reveals that Saudi Arabian youth and adults are generally proficient in basic tasks such as using copy and paste tools, sending emails with attachments, and managing software, while less proficient in tasks like creating multimedia presentations and programming. In addition, 2021 data shows that there are generally minor gender disparities in education levels and ICT skills in Saudi Arabia. The gender parity index is relatively close to 1 in most aspects of education, suggesting a balanced gender representation. The data also suggests that global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are fully integrated into the student assessment processes. This suggests that Saudi Arabia is assessing students effectively on these topics, ensuring that they have a solid understanding and grasp of global citizenship and sustainable development concepts.

Overall, SDG indicators demonstrate that Saudi Arabia has made substantial progress in improving its education sector and providing high-quality education opportunities for its citizens. The government is committed to expanding access to education and improving the quality of education for all students.

### PUBLISHED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PAPERS FROM SAUDI INSTITUTIONS



<sup>5</sup> More information on the website [www.mof.gov.sa](http://www.mof.gov.sa).



## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia's education policy framework is guided by the **National Education and Training Strategy**, which outlines the vision, goals, and objectives for the development of the education sector. The strategy focuses on providing a comprehensive, quality education for all, with a particular emphasis on preparing students for the future. Key priorities include improving access to education, promoting scientific research, and preparing students for the changing job market. The government has launched the Human Capability Development Program, which represents a national strategy aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of national human capabilities locally and globally. The government has also established the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) to enhance the skills and capabilities of the workforce by providing financial support and incentives to organizations to invest in the development of their employees through various training and development programs. HRDF's objective is to help in the creation of a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can contribute to the growth and competitiveness of the Saudi Arabian economy. The Prince Sultan University has established King Salman Center for Education for Employment (KSCEE) to provide young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the workforce and improve employment opportunities in the country. The center offers a range of programs and services, including vocational training, language classes, and job placement assistance.

The following are some key ongoing initiatives in the education sector:

### KEY ONGOING INITIATIVES

#### Transformation of the educational system

The educational system in Saudi Arabia is undergoing a transformation, focusing on increasing university independence, professionalizing teaching, and developing specialized academies. New curricula aim to strengthen national character and learning outcomes. Initiatives include school classification, integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF-KSA) to standardize qualifications. Additionally, to enhance the education sector, the government is developing research partnerships with international institutions.

#### Talent development and identification (Mawhiba Program)

This program identifies and nurtures gifted students through targeted initiatives, scholarships, and financial support. It has supported the establishment of the Virtual School (Madrasati) and the National Center for E-Learning, promoting efficient education, equal access, and the integration of e-learning in the educational process.

#### Early childhood development initiatives

The government has prioritized early childhood development and education, increasing investments and launching multiple initiatives. The Virtual Kindergarten Platform (Rawdati), established in 2019, offers remote learning opportunities for young children using digital technologies and interactive materials. Early developmental learning standards for ages three to six guide institutions in understanding children's knowledge, behaviors, and expected skills. The Mother and Child Education Program supports mothers in nurturing their children's mental, physical, emotional, and social skills. The Personal Safety Program, developed in collaboration with AGFUND and UNICEF, promotes safety values and skills among children, teachers, and parents in a healthy educational environment. The Improving the Learning Environment in Kindergartens Program, partnered with King Abdulaziz University, assesses the quality of educational environments in public and private kindergartens. The Ministry of Education has established educational standards for kindergarten schools and created a National Framework for Early Childhood Curriculum. This has enabled the further development of early childhood schools that provide high-quality educational opportunities for all children.

#### Children with special needs

The Ministry of Education has implemented various measures to ensure comprehensive access to education for children with special needs. These steps include opening early intervention centers in kindergartens for early support and inclusion, launching Taiba Educational City for Special Education in partnership with the private sector, and inaugurating Sinnad City for Special Education in Mecca. Furthermore, a tailored curriculum has been developed for students with disabilities, introducing new books and subjects such as English, digital skills, social studies, and physical education. Sign language has been incorporated into the family education curriculum, along with life skills for all educational levels, promoting the integration of students with disabilities in regular schools. Additionally, support service centers have been established in different cities, providing access to necessary resources and assistance for students with disabilities.

#### Science and technology education

The government has placed a greater emphasis on science and technology education by launching a National Study Plan that increases learning hours for science, mathematics, and digital skills. This effort is further supported by the establishment of over 100 STEM centers across all regions of the Kingdom. Additionally, compulsory technical training has been introduced in selected educational programs at the secondary level and beyond, reinforcing the commitment to fostering a technology-driven educational landscape.

#### Technical and vocational education

The Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) is dedicated to rehabilitating and preparing the workforce in technical and vocational fields by developing programs and human resources that align with the country's needs. As part of its efforts, the TVTC has expanded the Applied Technical Bachelor's Program and established special technical colleges for girls, aiming to achieve gender equality in education and learning opportunities. By focusing on skills and operational efficiency, the TVTC has attracted international expertise to operate international colleges and institutes of strategic partnerships, ultimately raising the quality of training and optimizing the use of available human and financial resources for distinguished quality training.

### Launching a Number of Science and Knowledge Programs

The Kingdom has launched science and knowledge programs to empower future generations by opening up and investing in previously untapped sectors. Some of these programs include:

#### Establishing the Path of Excellence

The program aims to raise the level of scientific knowledge by sending students to distinguished international educational institutions.

#### Establishing the Culture Scholarship Program

It is the first scholarship program in the Kingdom for students to study for BA, MA, and PhD programs abroad in the fields of music, theater, film and archaeology. The program aims to provide the cultural sectors with rich talent.

#### Establishing the Entertainment Pioneers Program

The program was established in partnership with a leading US company to train Saudis in entertainment sector skills.

#### Establishing the Saudi Digital Academy

The Academy is responsible for developing the digital capabilities of the Kingdom in partnership with the private sector.

#### Launching 14 Digital Innovation Labs

The Digital Innovation Labs network benefited 26,000 people, with a total of 260 training camps.

#### Establishing the Digital Filmmaker Program

In collaboration with the British Film Institute, the School of Film Arts at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and the Institute for Creative Media Skills at the Pinewood Studios in Britain, the project features 21 training programs in film-making disciplines.

#### Establishing the Saudi Real Estate Institute

The academic arm of the Real Estate General Authority is designed to teach, train and disseminate the best international practices of the real estate sector. By the end of 2020, it had trained more than 43,000 trainees.

### Investing in teachers

The Ministry of Education has prioritized investing in teachers by focusing on their professional development, raising efficiency, and supporting their educational roles. These efforts include launching a professional teacher's license as a condition for appointment and promotion, and approving a new list of educational jobs to professionalize education. This system includes teacher ranks from assistant to expert, based on professional and personal development dimensions. Moreover, the ministry is intensifying professional development processes for teachers through the Digital Training Initiative and optimizing the investment in educational cadres by rehabilitating them academically in disciplines related to their main specializations and educational field requirements.

launching  
**104**  
stem  
centers

104 scientific centers were inaugurated inside schools to increase STEM skills. They are designed to focus on technology and innovation and raise the professional competence of teachers and supervisors.

### Lifelong learning

The government has emphasized lifelong learning by focusing on vocational and technical skills and establishing partnerships with international organizations for training and educational opportunities. The Kingdom celebrated Arab Literacy Day 2022 to eradicate illiteracy and promote lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education has launched a neighborhood club recreational and educational program, providing educational services to citizens. Additionally, summer campaigns for awareness and literacy target remote areas. The "A Society Without Illiteracy Program" focuses on illiterate women in remote villages.

**143**  
patents  
granted

The number of registered patents granted to employees of Saudi government universities increased to 143 patents in 2020. High admissions of secondary school graduates in vocation training. The vocational training target for 2020 was 12.5% but 23.77% was actually achieved.

### Quality of Life Program

This program focuses on enhancing citizens' well-being and lifestyle through various initiatives, including developing sports and arts academies, implementing national training strategies, and creating diverse educational and vocational programs, ultimately enriching the country's cultural, artistic, and recreational landscape.

### UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

Jubail Industrial City and Yanbu Industrial City have been accredited by the network, with Jubail winning the UNESCO Learning City Award for outstanding progress in lifelong learning opportunities. Yanbu prioritizes educational planning, monitoring, and evaluation, particularly in e-learning and lifelong learning.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The government is actively addressing the need for more technical infrastructure and devices for students through collaboration with private and non-profit sectors, providing tablets and computers to students in need, and offering free access to educational websites and platforms. Moreover, the government has transitioned to online learning via satellite broadcasting channels by increasing the number of educational channels and launching the "Madrasati" and "Rawdaty" platforms for general and kindergarten education, respectively, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes and teacher-student interaction. The Ministry of Education is addressing the challenge that is the lack of readiness due to digital illiteracy and resistance to change by providing training materials, manuals, awareness messages, and training courses for teachers, supervisors, and school leaders.

The following are key actions for this SDG area:

- Through the Human Capacity Development Program, the government will improve educational outcomes to achieve higher grades on international tests, promote digitalization through online learning, attract international higher education and vocational institutions, and encourage private-sector and non-profit investments in curricula, technology, and innovation.
- Through the "Quality of Life Program," the government will focus on supporting physical activity in schools and universities, particularly for girls. Additionally, the program will promote theater as a cultural activity in higher education and train male and female students in theatrical arts in several universities.

# SDG 4 Quality Education: Prince Sultan University

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

There are around 8.4 million students in Saudi Arabia, approximately 25% of the Kingdom's total population. These students will form the heart of a more sustainable world. PSU, the government Of Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030 and the UN's SDG agenda all have the same ultimate ambition: to create a world that works for all-both now and in the future.



Prince Sultan University (PSU) is the first Carbon Neutral Certified University in the MENA Region, in accordance with the carbon Neutral Protocol, the leading global framework for Carbon neutrality.



As part of youth engagement strategy, the PSU SDG Club, being part of the PSU center for Sustainability and Climate (CSC), coordinates social and educational events to spread awareness and advocate for sustainable initiatives at the university and among the student population.



Students participated in international conferences such as Harvard MUN, Prague MUN, winning numerous awards. Since 2019, PSUMUN has been organizing its own conference. CSC hosted workshops alongside United Nations Global Compact (UNGC).

### IMPACT



The list of ongoing initiative and campaigns include:

- GO GREEN initiative
- Zero Waste Campaign
- Earth day
- UN SDG and Climate Week
- Youth Sustainability
- Leadership Certification
- Volunteering at (CSC)



The exemplary zero waste initiative focuses on driving circularity on campus through:

- Creating awareness about achieving the zero waste goal within the PSU campus.
- Incentivizing students to ideate and initiate projects that help reduce waste on campus.

The program offers rewards to students of up to SAR 8,000.



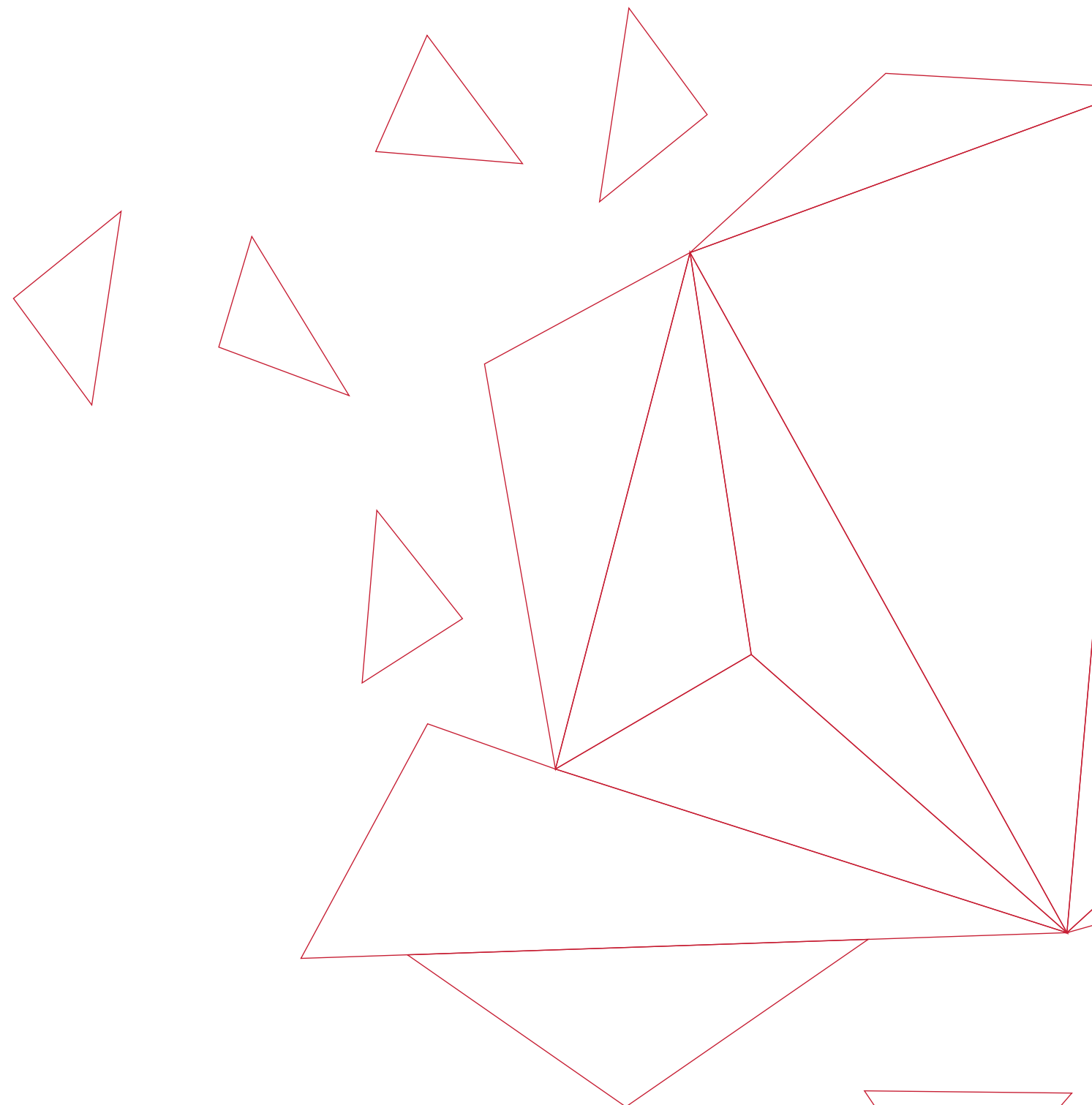
Energy generation is one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, and renewable energy investment is a fast and effective solution to reduce these emissions.

Challenge

### NEXT STEPS

PSU is one of the universities in Saudi Arabia to pledge net zero carbon emissions by 2060.

The university has signed up to race to zero, a global initiative for a zero-carbon world.





# 5 GENDER EQUALITY





## 1. General Situation

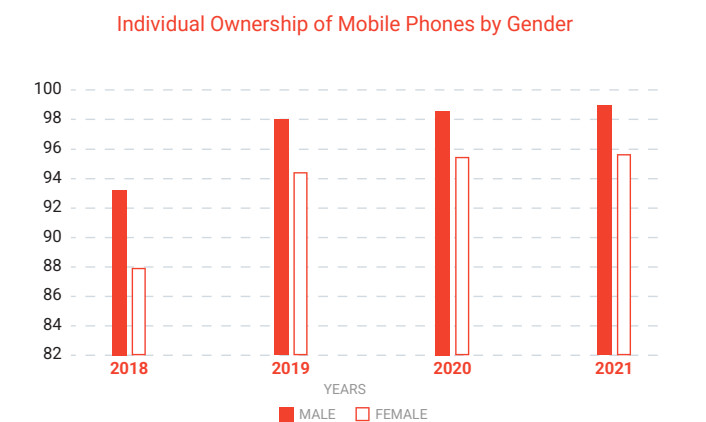
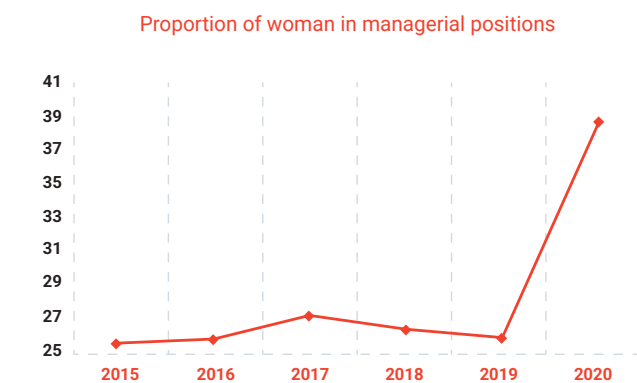
Saudi Arabia has taken steps to achieve a cohesive method of equality between the men and women of society in various fields by enhancing their rights, support systems and care programs, thus improving their work environment in all sectors. In recent years, the government has taken several key measures to empower women and improve gender equality, including increasing women's participation in the workforce.

The laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, derived from Islamic law, adopt the principle of complementary equality between men and women, taking into account the characteristics of both sexes, to achieve ultimate justice, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that the integration of the relationship between the sexes is an ideal way to promote and protect human rights and to guarantee the equality between men and women, such as the rights to work, education, health, economic rights and others.

Saudi Arabia has made significant efforts to promote gender equality in line with Saudi regulations. These efforts include reinforcing women's rights through judicial decisions, empowering women in education and professional development, enhancing women's healthcare, providing social support, and promoting women's participation in the realms of justice, business, and politics.

Between 2015 and 2020, SDG data from GASTAT shows a positive trend in women's representation in managerial positions in both the governmental and private sectors.

The representation of women in private sector management increased from 20.02% in 2015 to 32.28% in 2020. The data also shows that between 2018 and 2021 there was significant growth in mobile phone ownership among both individuals and adults, regardless of gender (the proportion for women stood at about 95% in 2021).



Data from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) shows that the illiteracy rate among Saudi women over 15 years old was 4% in 2020. The enrollment rate for girls in secondary schools when they reach the appropriate age was 108.3% in 2020. In 2020, 58.8% of Saudi women aged 25 and older had attained a secondary education degree, while 36.4% of them had completed post-secondary education.



The following are some key highlights on gender equality in Saudi Arabia:

### Women in the labor force:

The percentage of women participating in the labor force has increased. As of the second quarter of 2022, Saudi women's unemployment rate stood at 19.3%, decreasing from 30.8% in the fourth quarter of 2019. Women represented 30.1% of total Saudi employment in 2022 Q2, up from 21.5% in the fourth quarter of 2019. Similarly, Saudi women's labor force participation rate increased over the past years to 35.6% in the second quarter of 2022, from 26% in the fourth quarter of 2019.<sup>7</sup>

### Women's economic empowerment:

Women's economic empowerment has improved, with increased access to credit, property, and other resources that are critical for their financial security and independence. As can be seen in the figure above, the percentage of women's participation in middle and senior management positions exceeded 39% by the end of 2021. Saudi Arabia scored 80 out of 100 in the 2022 World Bank Women's Business and Law Report, an improvement of 10 points from the 2020 score.<sup>8</sup>

### Women in politics:

Women participate in the Kingdom's Shura Council, currently, the proportion of seats held by women in the Shura Council is 20%. Further, several Saudi women have been appointed to different leadership positions, such as the Ambassador, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, Deputy Minister, Assistant to the Speaker of the Shura Council, and other positions.

### Women in local governance:

Saudi Arabia has made efforts towards gender equality, allowing women to participate in municipal elections as voters and candidates since 2015. Although only 21 women out of 2,106 candidates were elected in the first election, the number increased significantly to 417 in the 2019 municipal elections, representing 24% of the seats.

### Key Priorities of the Saudi Government to Promote Gender Equality

- ▶ Lifting the ban on women driving in 2018, which was a significant step towards empowering women and improving their mobility.
- ▶ Improving women's access to healthcare.
- ▶ Increasing the participation of women in the workforce, through initiatives that support women entrepreneurs and provide them with training and skills development.
- ▶ Improving women's representation in decision-making positions, including appointing women to high-level government positions.
- ▶ Promoting women's education through initiatives such as the "Education for All" campaign, aimed to increase enrollment and graduation rates for girls in schools and universities.
- ▶ Addressing violence against women and criminalizing domestic violence through the legal framework.

### Growth in Women Owned SMEs

Five years after the launch of vision 2030, the empowerment of female entrepreneurs has increased the number of women-owned SMEs by 16% points from 22% to 38%.

### Women's Education:

The government has made significant efforts to promote gender equality in education, and there is near-parity in terms of enrollment rates for girls and boys in primary and secondary education.

### Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM):

Progress has been made in improving women's representation in the STEM fields, creating opportunities for women to pursue careers in these fields and providing support for women who do choose to study or work in STEM.

### Women's Legal Rights:

Women's rights have been expanded, increasing their opportunities and ability to travel and work.

### Women's Health:

Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in enabling women to access quality healthcare services, including reproductive health services and protection from gender-based violence.

### Women in Media and Sports:

Women's representation in the media has increased and women's voices and perspectives have become more prominent. Women's participation in sports has increased, and restrictions on their ability to participate in sports and engage in physical activity have been removed.



The first women's football league was launched in 2020 together with the establishment of the women's national teams. Following the launch of Vision 2030, the number of national teams reached 25 in 2020.

Participation of 72 Saudi female players, the most in the Kingdom's history, at the 5th Arab Women Sports Tournament in Sharjah in 2020. The participants won 12 medals.

<sup>7</sup> Information can be found at [www.stats.gov.sa](http://www.stats.gov.sa).

<sup>8</sup> Information can be found at [www.vision2030.gov.sa](http://www.vision2030.gov.sa).



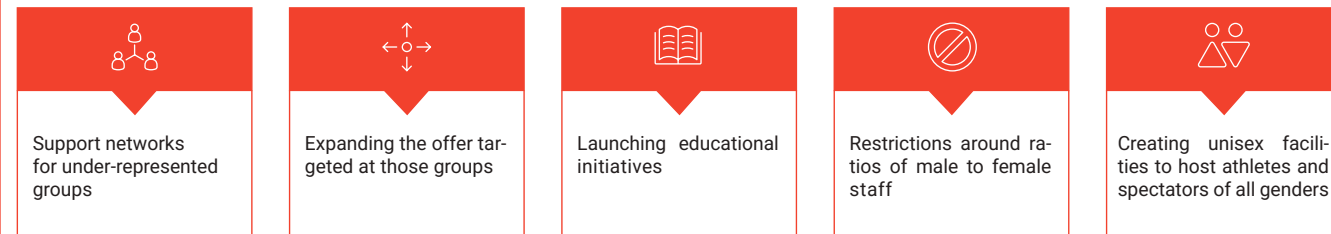
# Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

## Ministry of Sports

### IN-DEPTH CASE

#### SUMMARY

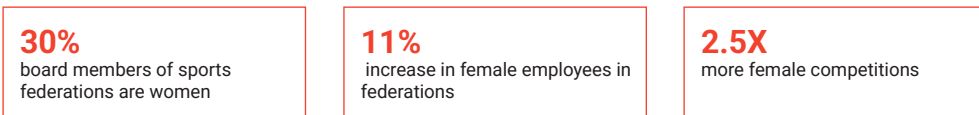
In 2018, the Kingdom launched a project focusing on enhancing detection of the HCV virus through integrated screening of the entire population, with a priority on vulnerable groups. The project included training an adequate number of staff and improving facilities to fight the virus.



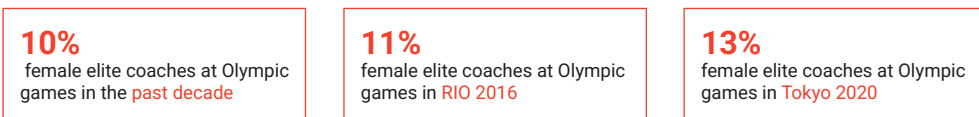
The Strategy links mostly to **SDG 5** as the project aims to create equal opportunities and access to sports to all genders and people with disabilities. Positive flow through effects were identified for **SDG8**.

#### IMPACT

The project has already seen initial success. Saudi Arabia witnessed a sustained commitment to increase the participation of women in sports on multiple levels, doubling in number from 2015 to 2019. There has also been significant improvement in access to sports facilities for women, which has been a struggle previously, as women were not able to attend sports gatherings.

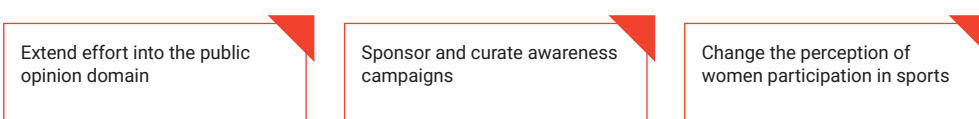


The advancements show that changes within the sports community are happening, and even controversial aspects are addressed.



#### NEXT STEPS

As the project continues, the way forward is to extend the Ministry's efforts into the domain of public opinion, where there's a plan to sponsor and curate awareness campaigns to change the perception of women participation in sports among Saudis of all age and genders



## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress towards achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. **Vision 2030** included a strategic objective to expand women's participation in the labor force. Vision 2030 ensures women's rights in the areas of health, education, social protection, work, and having access to a respectable level of living. Several initiatives have been launched to foster an inclusive environment in the labor market. These include changes to labor law and family law that have allowed women to drive, serve in the military, and benefit from other incentive programs. They have enabled Saudi women to become increasingly present in the labor market and, in leadership and managerial positions.

The following are some specific initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women in Saudi Arabia:

- The **Basic Law of Governance** prohibits discrimination against women and bans all forms of discrimination. The Royal Decree ensures shelter as well as social and psychological services and healthcare to victims of abuse. In 2019, a series of laws were introduced to promote women's rights, including laws allowing women to travel abroad without the permission of a male guardian, and laws giving women the right to register a marriage, divorce or birth of a child and to obtain official family documents. Other legislative developments in recent years include the introduction of laws to protect women from domestic violence and harassment, and to promote equal pay for equal work.
- To eliminate work-related discrimination, the **Labor Law** has established a number of rights and obligations, such as equal pay in the event of equal value and quality of work,<sup>9</sup> and full equality in the search for work aid, and in training programs to obtain work. The Labor Law prohibits discrimination against women in hiring or wages.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the law includes provisions for maternity leave, nursing breaks, and work conditions specific to women's needs. It also prohibits employers from terminating a female worker's employment during her maternity leave or during illness resulting from pregnancy or childbirth, as well as women's employment in mines or quarries. A set of ministerial decisions further regulate women's work conditions. These decisions provide guidelines on the employment of female workers at night, women's participation in worker's committees, and the spatial environment of women's work. In January 2023, the Saudi Cabinet approved the "national policy to promote equality of opportunities and treatment in employment and occupation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". Furthermore, the Civil Service Law in its first article states that merit is the basis for selecting employees to occupy public positions.
- Saudi Arabia's educational system ensures equality between men and women. Women have received particular attention, especially with the continued establishment of a number of university cities for girls, such as Princess Noura bint Abdulrahman University, and the university cities of Imam Muhammad bin Saud University and King Saud University.
- Gender Balance Center** was established under the Institute of Public Administration to coordinate the efforts of public agencies to achieve gender balance in the Kingdom by presenting initiatives and projects that contribute to bridging the gender gaps, holding training programs, and providing consultations, studies, and administrative organization.

## ▶ THE GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED KEY INITIATIVES AIMED TO EMPOWER WOMEN

### Quality of Life Program

Initiatives under this program include revamping major sports facilities to cater to families and women, eliminating systemic barriers to enable women's contribution to the sports sector, and encouraging female students to engage in sports by building and outfitting sports halls and gymnasiums throughout the Kingdom.

### National Agenda for the Development of Women

Is a strategic plan aimed at improving the status of women in areas such as health, education, and employment.

### National Family Safety Program

Protects families from violence, by monitoring and studying abuse cases and raising awareness of the harms of violence.

### National Program for the Development of Education

Includes measures to improve the professional skills of female teachers in all regions.

### Supporting Childcare for Working Women (Qurrah Program)

Is a unified online portal that brings together everything related to the childcare sector in the Kingdom. The portal enables childcare centers to offer and market their services to parents.

### Kanaf

Is a platform designed for the neediest categories of widows and divorced women by giving them financing to help them bear the costs and burdens of life.

### Sakani Program

Helps Saudis to own or rent a home by providing a range of services that fulfill aspirations and all needs to contribute to facilitating the ways for them to own a home.

### Qiadya Program

Launched by the Women's Leadership Center at the Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, is an initiative aimed at empowering Saudi women in leadership roles. It offers leadership training and skill development to women from the public sector, private sector and civil society.

### Wusool Program

Covers 80% of the transportation cost through ride hailing apps for a period of 24 months for 56,851 women.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Despite the progress made towards promoting gender equality in local governance in Saudi Arabia, there is still much work to be done to address the underlying social, cultural, and legal barriers that limit women's participation in decision-making processes at the local level. Concerted efforts from government, civil society, and international organizations will continue to ensure that women can fully participate in decision-making that affects their lives and communities. Also, additional efforts are required to ensure the employment of Saudi women in managerial positions and in more productive and high value-added sectors. The government has launched initiatives to promote women's entrepreneurship, but more efforts are needed to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.

The government has prioritized several issues, including increasing women's participation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, promoting women's economic empowerment, and enhancing access to education and healthcare for women. The following are some steps for the way forward:

- Conduct further research and analysis to identify and address key barriers to women's participation in the public and private sector.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to promote gender-responsive policies and practices that support women's economic empowerment.
- Develop legal and regulatory reforms to support, enhance, and increase women's participation in the public and private sector.
- Engage with communities to raise awareness of women's participation in decision-making and promote gender equality.
- Develop and implement tailored leadership development programs for women in government to enhance their representation, leadership, and decision-making roles.
- Track and evaluate progress in this area.

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



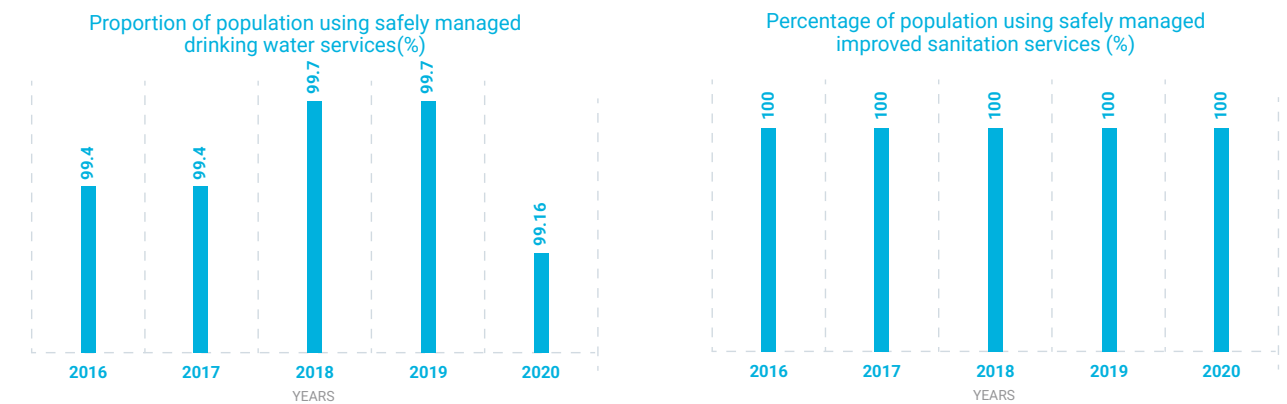




# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has increased access to clean water and improved sanitation services, particularly in rural areas. The government has improved the water and wastewater infrastructure, increasing the population's access to drinking water, reducing water waste and improving water use efficiency. The government has taken steps to address water scarcity through various initiatives, such as water desalination, reuse of treated wastewater, development of renewable groundwater, harvesting of rainwater and implementation of efficient irrigation systems.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that between 2016 and 2020, nearly 100% of the population consistently had access to safely managed drinking water services. The government has invested significantly in desalination technology to supplement water supply. Efforts have focused on improving water quality, including measures to reduce the impacts of pollution and improve water treatment processes. Similarly, the data shows that the entire population has access to safely managed sanitation services. The government has made significant investments in building and upgrading sewage treatment plants to improve the management of wastewater. The country is also promoting the use of technologies, such as composting toilets, to reduce the environmental impact of wastewater treatment and disposal.



**Wastewater Treatment:** The government has invested in improving the management of wastewater to reduce the impact of wastewater on public health and the environment and provide ample volumes of tertiary treated water, which can be repurposed for a range of applications including agriculture, industry, and urban activities. In 2020, Saudi Arabia entered into a partnership to build the first independent sewage treatment plant (ISTP), which seeks to become a blueprint for future private sector wastewater initiatives, processing up to 350,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wastewater per day. By 2030, total capacity is envisaged to reach 10.3 million m<sup>3</sup> per day.

**Water Conservation:** The government has launched water conservation initiatives, including the promotion of efficient water use practices, to reduce the demand on water resources and ensure the sustainable use of water in the country. To reduce agriculture demand for water,<sup>13</sup> the government has set targets to increase on-farm irrigation efficiency up to 75%, as well as enforce an ambitious reduction in the quantity of non-renewable groundwater use by 2030.

**Water Reuse:** The government is promoting the reuse of treated wastewater for agricultural and other non-potable purposes, to conserve water resources and reduce the demand on fresh water supplies.

**Global Achievement in Desalinated Water Production**

- 

The Kingdom is the largest producer of desalinated water in the world, reducing the strain on conventional water sources.
- 

Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) produced 5.9 million m<sup>3</sup> per day in 2020 at 32 desalination plants using 63 pumping stations for 319 reservoirs with a capacity of 20.3 million m<sup>3</sup> of water per day.
- 

The Kingdom holds the Guinness World Record for the 'highest desalinated water production in the world', and 'the largest desalinated water plant in the world' for the Jubail desalination plant, which produces 1.4 million m<sup>3</sup> per day.

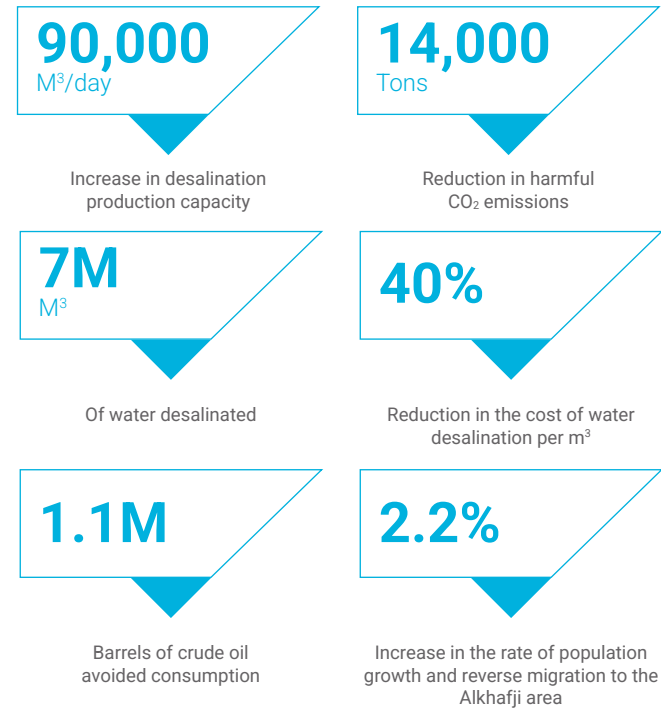
<sup>13</sup> Agriculture is the highest water-demanding sector, consuming 84% of the total water consumption, while growing at a yearly rate of 7% with high dependence on non-renewable groundwater (around 80%).

Accordingly, an ambitious target is set to raise treated sewage water reuse from 14.4% in 2016, to 80% of the total quantity produced by the year 2030. The government has taken measures to ensure that the benefits of water and sanitation are equitably distributed. This includes measures to ensure that rural and remote communities have access to clean water and improved sanitation. The government has also prioritized, the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women and children, who are often disproportionately affected by inadequate water and sanitation facilities.

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia has established several institutions and policies to support sustainable water management, such as regulations for the reuse of treated wastewater and the reduction of water waste. The following are major institutions and policies in this sector:

### Water Desalination Project



The following are some key ongoing initiatives in the sector:

### KEY ONGOING INITIATIVES

#### Quality of Life Program

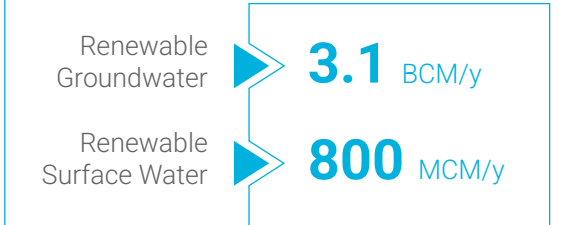
The initiative "Reducing the Surface Water Level in Coastal Cities" aims to reduce the surface water level in coastal cities, followed by the implementation of projects to establish networks for lowering the surface water level and draining rainwater to protect public and private property and to reduce the amount spent for the maintenance of road networks in coastal cities.

#### National Program for Water Conservation "Qatrah"

Aims to reduce the average per capita consumption of water in the Kingdom to 150 liters in 2030 through a package of programs to rationalize consumption. The program promotes methods for rationalizing consumption and educate the population on the importance of adjusting their water usage habits.

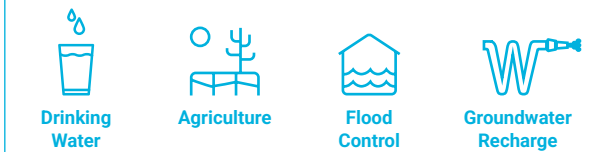
### AUGMENTING THE USE OF RENEWABLE GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER USE IN AGRICULTURE

#### Quantities by 2030



#### Studies

MEWA has completed various studies on 600 Wadi dam sites in the Western and Southwestern regions to be constructed for different uses including:



### SAUDI INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

#### National Water Strategy (2030)

Developed by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, the strategy aims at the reduction in the use of non-renewable groundwater in agriculture by about 10 billion cubic meters in 2030, while increasing the use of renewable water resources and surface water in agriculture.

#### Water Law

Focuses on the sustainable management and conservation of water resources in the country, emphasizing their efficient utilization and equitable distribution. The law establishes a regulatory framework for water usage, allocation, and preservation, ensuring that water resources are used responsibly.

#### Water Regulator

Regulates the provision of water supplies in a safe, clean, reliable, high-quality, and competitively-priced manner, ensuring fairness among consumers and guaranteeing access to water for everyone's needs while protecting the rights of consumers, service providers, and the public interest.

#### National Center for Water Efficiency and Conservation

Develops and oversees national water efficiency programs, sets performance indicators and goals, and evaluates their effectiveness. The center also certifies and licenses service providers and coordinates water efficiency and conservation services, including measurement and verification.

#### Saudi Irrigation Organization

Oversees the country's irrigation sector, aiming to reduce agricultural water consumption from non-renewable resources. It is leading the shift away from water-intensive crops such as wheat, alfalfa, and fodder and the adoption of modern irrigation methods and practices.

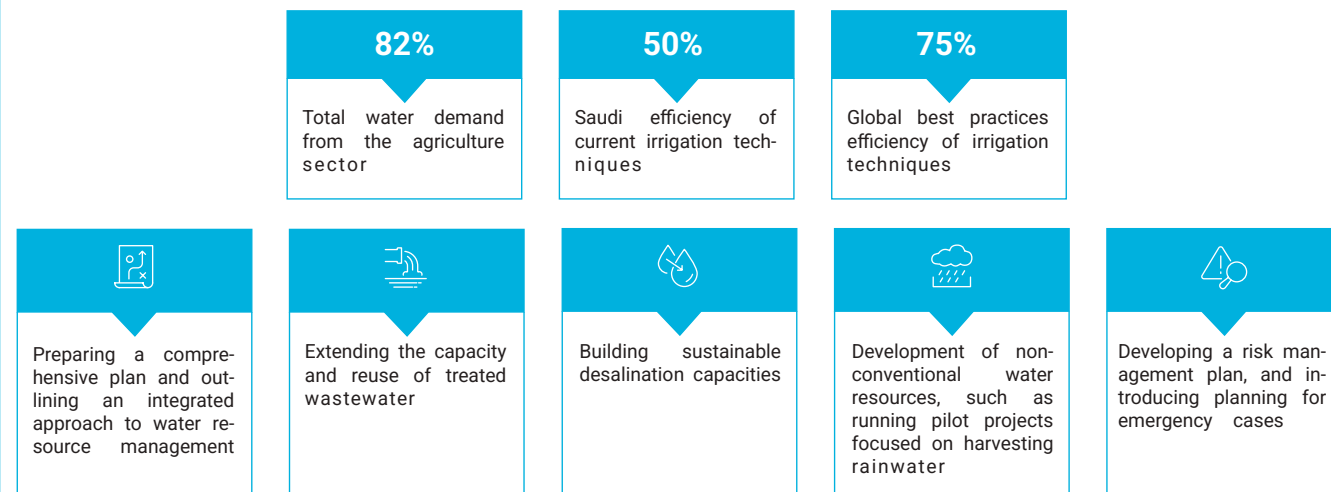


# Transformation of Water Sector Towards Sustainability and Social Development

## IN-DEPTH CASE

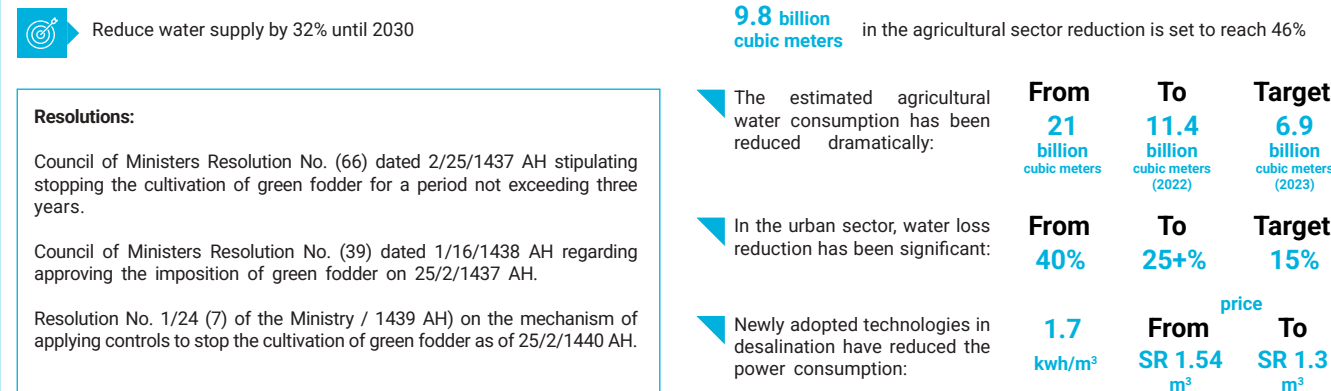
Critical shortcomings have been attributed to low efficiency of irrigation techniques, low-awareness, poor infrastructure, as well as gaps in water sector policies and legislation. **The Kingdom's response** to water supply challenges was outlined the **National Water Strategy 2030**, and includes:

### SUMMARY



### IMPACT

The aim of the initiatives is to limit reliance on non-renewable water and promote the use of treated wastewater and renewable water alike.



### NEXT STEPS

For many years, the Saudi government has been trying to resolve issues around water production, transmission distribution, collection, and treatment. Past operational complexities slowed progress in this regard, but with the new structure in place, there's already evidence of progress in resolving issues, such as reflecting more precisely the actual costs incurred throughout the supply chain.

#### NWS developed an 11-Step and Three-Phase Approach



### Increase of Water Availability and Storage Capacity

Efforts to increase water availability and storage capacity have led to the implementation of over 550 water dams, with a combined storage capacity of approximately 2.6 billion m<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, the "Agricultural Terraces Rehabilitation and Rainwater Harvesting Techniques Implementation in Southwestern Saudi Arabia" initiative has been established as part of Vision 2030, further bolstering water conservation strategies.

### Wastewater Treatment

Investments have been made in the Madinah-3 wastewater treatment plant, which will ultimately achieve a maximum capacity of treating around 375,000 m<sup>3</sup> of urban water. Sustainable desalination and water treatment capabilities are also being developed, including solar-powered water treatment plants through collaborations between Taqnia Energy, a PIF subsidiary, and KACST. Aramco is implementing a water conservation roadmap, focusing on supplementing water supplies with nontraditional sources, implementing water-efficient practices, maximizing wastewater reuse, minimizing water losses, and promoting water conservation awareness.

### Treated Effluent Reuse

Initiatives have been introduced to decrease water consumption for agricultural use and promote efficient water use practices. These efforts also aim to maximize the reuse of treated sewage effluent (TSE) for agricultural, industrial, and urban purposes, further enhancing water resource management.

## ADOPTING REVERSE OSMOSIS (RO) TECHNOLOGY

RO is an improved desalination technology

#### Adopted in:

- Umluj Plant Production capacity: **26,600 m<sup>3</sup> per day**
- Haql Plant Production capacity: **17,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day**

#### Expected to be used:

- Farasan Plant Designed capacity: **8,600 m<sup>3</sup> per day**
- Rashid Project: The project will save **7.6 million m<sup>3</sup>** of water annually. It will accomplish this by: detecting and repairing leaks, installing rationalization tools, monitoring consumption and raising public awareness



### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The government is committed to ensuring access to safe and affordable drinking water, including in remote and rural areas. Efforts are focused on further improving the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of desalination.

The government is also committed to keeping pace with technological development to improve irrigation methods and raise water use efficiency. This commitment includes the establishment of demonstration farms and a technical center focused on developing innovative irrigation practices and methods.

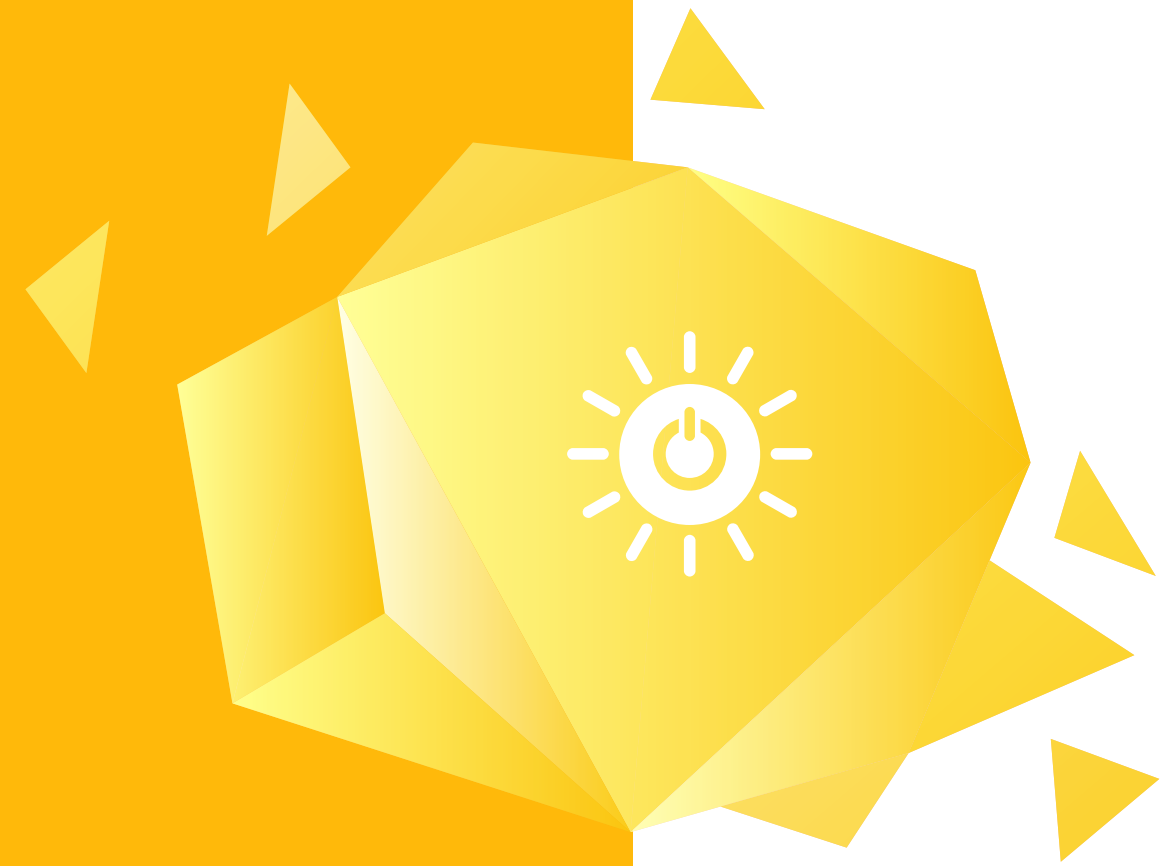
#### ▶ Digging the **longest desalinated water tunnel in the world**

The project in Taif City, runs through the rugged Sarawat Mountains at a length of 12.6 km. It was built ahead of schedule and in record time. Progress peaked at 60.8 m of tunnel completed per day, despite the difficult terrain and the repercussions of COVID-19.

The following are some steps for the way forward completing projects and studies to support national targets:

- Enhance the reuse of treated sewage effluent (TSE) for agricultural and other non-potable water use.
- Develop methods for renewable groundwater and rainwater harvesting to be used in irrigation.
- Create a comprehensive irrigation master plan.
- Establish a Saudi code for irrigation and drainage systems.
- Encourage efficient irrigation and water productivity among farmers.

# 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



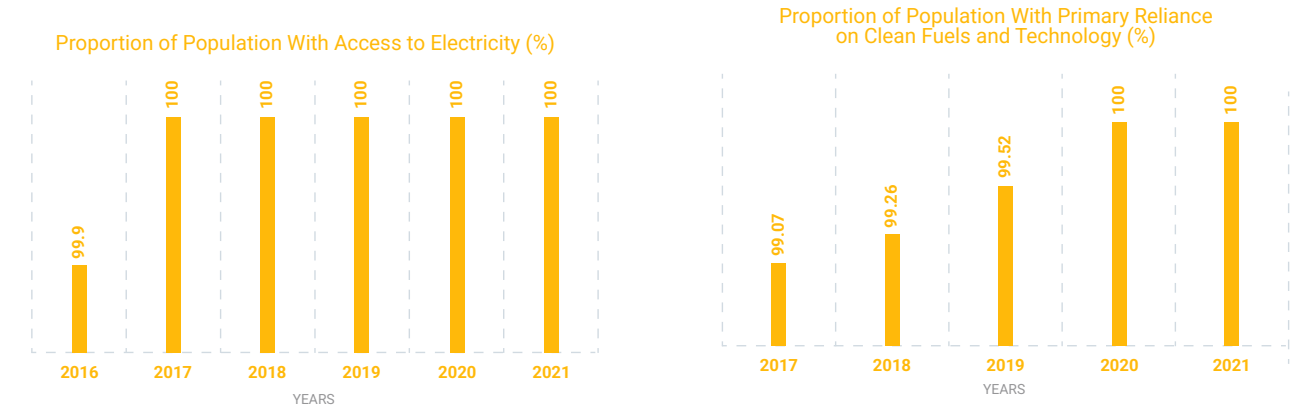




# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia is a leading producer of energy and has made progress in increasing access to clean energy sources. The government has also launched initiatives aimed at improving energy efficiency, such as retrofitting buildings with energy-saving technologies and promoting the use of electric vehicles.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that Saudi Arabia has achieved universal access to electricity for its population. The data also indicates that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in ensuring its population relies primarily on clean fuels and technology.



Saudi Arabia has taken steps to modernize and diversify its energy sector, including investments in clean technologies for the oil and gas sector and the development of natural gas as an alternative to crude oil for power generation. The government is expanding the grid infrastructure and the development of off-grid renewable energy solutions to provide effective access to energy to rural and remote communities. Another important aspect of this work is the digitalization and improvement of the smart grid.

The Kingdom's energy efficiency program has improved energy efficiency in:



Power Plants



Desalination Facilities



Industry



Agriculture

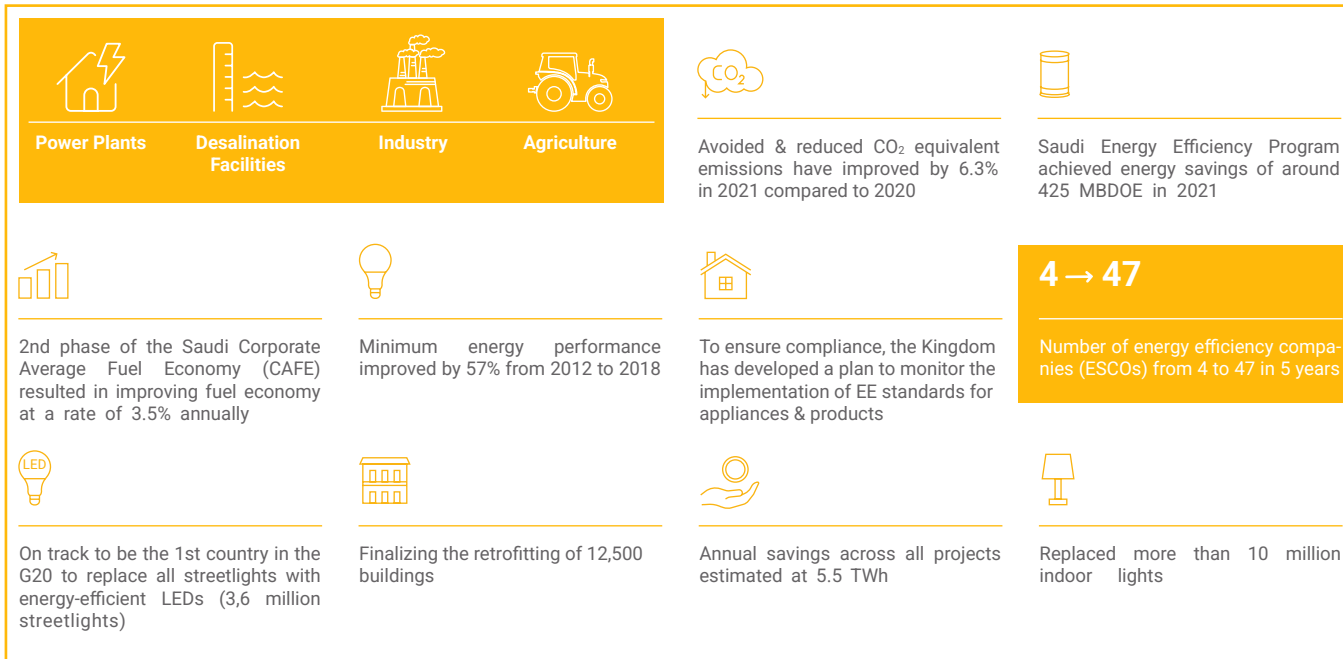
CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions  
**2021** < CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions  
**2020**  
 6.3%  
 425 MBD0E energy savings by the end of 2021

The Kingdom developed an enforcement plan to monitor the implementation of energy efficiency standards for appliances and products



# Saudi Arabia's Achievements in Energy Efficiency

The Kingdom's national energy efficiency program improved the energy efficiency in:



## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Vision 2030 prioritizes the reduction of the country's dependence on oil and increasing the use of renewable energy. The Saudi Green Initiative (SGI), Saudi Arabia's flagship climate change initiative, provides the framework for these efforts. Under this framework, Saudi Arabia has developed an extensive set of policies designed to create a favorable environment for the development and growth of clean energy, including carbon capture utilization and storage, reducing the country's dependence on oil, and improving energy efficiency. SGI encompasses numerous efforts to reduce emissions and promote sustainability, such as implementing the Riyadh Sustainability Strategy, diverting 94% of Riyadh's waste from landfills, composting over 1.3 million tons of biodegradable waste, and partnering with the Alliance to End Plastic Waste.

**Renewable energy development:** Saudi Arabia has launched several large-scale renewable energy projects, including the 300MW Dhahran Solar Power Project, the 800MW Dumat Al-Jandal Wind Power Project, and the 2.5GW Sakaka Solar Power Project. The government is also promoting small-scale renewables, such as rooftop solar panels. The installed renewable capacity in the Kingdom totals 300MW of solar photovoltaics and 400MW of wind. This share is expected to grow rapidly. Saudi Arabia has set a goal to generate 50% of its power from renewables by 2030. The National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) aims to reach around 50% of the energy mix by 2030. Through this program, the government is initiating wide-ranging reforms, regulations, and policies to stimulate private-sector investment, research and development, and employment in renewables. The program sets out a roadmap to diversify local energy sources, stimulate economic development and establish the local renewable energy supply chain and industry. The Kingdom's renewable

### ESTABLISHING THE FIRST RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

The Sakaka Solar Power Project is the first in the series of renewable energy projects in the Kingdom with a production capacity of 300 MW and a standard tariff of SAR 0.0878 per kWh, sufficient to power more than 45,000 households. The 400MW Dumat al-Jandal project achieved a global record for wind power at the lowest tariff rate of SAR 0.0746 per kWh. 10 additional solar projects with a total capacity of 3600MW are still in progress.

program has been recognized with three international awards, including a global award from Project Finance International (PFI) for the best ESG platform and two awards from Infrastructure Journal Global. In the coming year, the Kingdom is working on finalizing plans to develop 10 more renewable energy projects, with the goal of integrating an additional 840MW of solar PV capacity into its grid. The Renewable Energy Project Development Office supports the development of renewable energy projects and has introduced a number of incentives and subsidies to encourage investment in this sector.

### WIND POWER PRODUCTION

The Dumat al-Jandal Wind power project received the "Deal of the Year" award for the renewable energy sector in the Middle East and Africa and is the first wind power project established in the Kingdom.

**Energy efficiency:** The Saudi Energy Efficiency Center launched the Saudi Energy Efficiency Program to ensure that Saudi Arabia becomes an energy efficient country through initiatives such as standards and regulations in buildings, transportation, industry, and utility sectors. The program has focused initially on the demand side, targeting three sectors - industry, transportation and building - that constitute more than 90% of domestic energy consumption. The program has made significant improvements in power plants, desalination facilities, industry, and agriculture. In 2021, the program achieved a 6.3% improvement in carbon emissions reduction compared to 2020, with energy savings of around 425 MBDOE. The energy efficiency market in the Kingdom has seen substantial growth, with the number of ESCOs increasing tenfold, from 4 to 47 companies, in just five years. The second phase of the Saudi Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) improved fuel economy at a rate of 3.5% annually. Furthermore, the Kingdom developed an enforcement plan to monitor the implementation of energy efficiency standards for appliances and products, resulting in a 57% improvement in minimum energy performance between 2012 and 2018. The National Energy Services Company (Tarshid) was established to incentivize energy efficiency in government buildings and private sector investment in energy efficiency services. It plans to retrofit the entire pool of public and governmental assets and facilities which include 2 million streetlights, 110,000 government buildings, 35,000 public schools, 100,000 mosques, and 2,500 hospitals and clinics. Saudi Electricity Company has deployed over 10 million smart meters, which has the potential of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 1.8 million tons annually and will promote efficient electricity use through daily/hourly consumption data.

### REDUCING COSTS AND INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

More than one million streetlamps in many cities have been replaced and more than 1,200 government buildings have been renovated to reduce costs and increase energy efficiency. The establishment of the National Energy Services Company "Tarshid" by the Public Investment Fund was an important step in the development of the energy efficiency sector in the Kingdom and it plays a key role in attracting international energy companies and FDI.

**Electric vehicles:** The government is promoting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) as part of its efforts to increase the use of clean energy. The government has launched various initiatives to support the development of the EV market, including the establishment of a charging infrastructure and the promotion of EVs through financial incentives and subsidies. Saudi Electric Vehicle Alliance promotes the use of electric vehicles and has taken steps to encourage the use of public transportation, bike-sharing, and other sustainable transportation options. The Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Economy and Planning are applying behavioral economics strategies through various initiatives to assist electricity customers in enhancing their consumption habits.

**CEER- Saudi Arabia's First Electric Vehicle Brand**

**The first Saudi electric vehicle brand, with a range of vehicles that includes Sedans and SUVs. Leading in infotainment, connectivity, and autonomous driving.**

Target Market	Economic Impact	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saudi Arabia</li> <li>• MENA Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract over \$150 million of foreign direct investment</li> <li>• Create up to 30,000 direct and indirect jobs</li> <li>• Contribute \$8 billion to Saudi Arabia's GDP by 2034</li> </ul>	
Component Technology License	Vehicle design, Manufacturing, and Testing in KSA	Scheduled Availability
		<b>2035</b>

**The Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) Program** was established by the government to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by deploying innovative CCE applications and technologies, while promoting the Kingdom's socio-economic development. CCE is a collaborative concept that aims for carbon circularity, neutrality, or net-zero carbon emissions, offering a comprehensive, technology-neutral, and cost-effective approach to evaluating climate change mitigation strategies at various levels. CCE extends the circular economy's three Rs - reduce, recycle, and reuse - by introducing a fourth 'R' for removal, while concentrating on energy and emissions flows rather than materials and products.

**The Oil Sustainability Program (OSP)** was launched in 2020 with the objective of sustaining hydrocarbons as a competitive source of energy and materials. The program aims to achieve its objectives through three main sectors; materials, utilities, and transportation.

**The Rural and Village Electrification Initiative** aims to develop a long-term strategy for electrifying both existing and new rural areas and villages, working closely with appropriate government agencies and monitoring the progress of implementation.

**Hydrogen:** The Kingdom is aiming to become a leading hydrogen producer and exporter by 2030. The Ministry of Energy's National Hydrogen Strategy envisages a number of measures outlined in the figure. It also includes the construction of a green hydrogen plant in NEOM.

**Saudi Arabia's Leadership in Hydrogen**

**8** Pilot projects for hydrogen fuel cell-based vehicles, buses, trains transportation applications, and sustainable jet fuel production have been launched domestically.

**7** Construction activities have started for the NEOM green hydrogen project.

**6** Government-to-Government MOUs, including USA, Germany, UK, South Korea, Singapore, and Greece were signed recently.

Obtained the world's first independent certifications recognizing "blue" hydrogen and ammonia production

Certified 138,000 tons of blue ammonia, nearly 14% of global certified ammonia production

Commercial shipments left the Kingdom carrying 50,000 tons of certified ammonia to South Korea.

In the process of building hydrogen fueling stations

**Carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS):** The Kingdom is planning to deploy one of the world's largest CCUS hubs in the Eastern region with a capacity of 44 million tons of carbon per year by 2035.

**The Liquid Displacement Program** supports the Kingdom's energy mix transformation by switching remaining liquid fuel in power generation to natural gas. The program aims to displace more than 1 million barrels of liquid fuel consumed daily by 2030 (95% reduction) across three main sectors (power plants and desalination facilities, industry and agriculture). Since 2019, the program has reduced liquid fuel consumption by 7.5% and is currently converting one of the world's largest desalination plants to gas, contributing to the energy ecosystem strategy's goal of achieving a 50% gas and 50% renewable generation capacity mix by 2030.

**The King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC)** is an institution that focuses on research on energy and environment policies, economics and technologies and acts as an advisory center to the Saudi energy sector. Its services range across open-source templates and tools for researchers, academics, and political decision makers. With a total of 10 focus areas, KAPSARC's ambition is to become a globally renowned research center.

**Saudi Arabia's Carbon Capture Measures**

**By 2027** The launch of a Carbon Capture Company to be completed, with a 9 mtpa capacity

The Kingdom is building one of the world's largest carbon capture and storage hubs with a capacity of 44 mtpa by 2035

**3** Pilot projects have been recently launched:

KAUST-NEOM-SEC	ASCC-AHG	Ma'aden-Gulf Cryo
10 kilotons per year for power generation applications	Self-sustainable CCUS for cement industries	Utilize CO <sub>2</sub> captured from Ammonia facilities for Industrial Applications



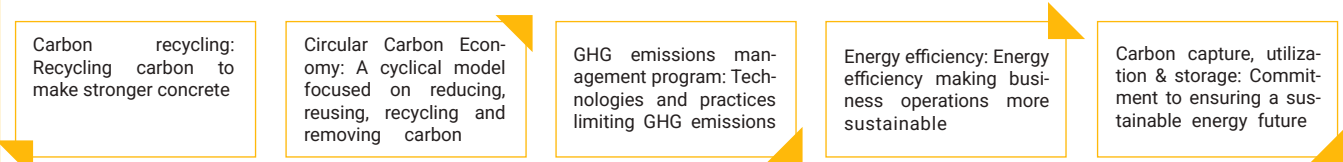
# SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy: Saudi Aramco's support for just and sustainable energy transition

## IN-DEPTH CASE

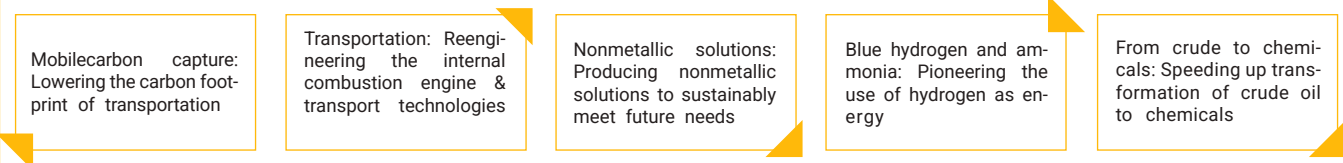
### SUMMARY

One of Saudi Aramco's 4 impact areas is "to more effectively combat change" for a successful energy transition. It is embracing energy efficiency & increasing use of renewable energy for its operations, while advancing the science of carbon capture, including natural & technology-led solutions. Aramco is also working with international partners to develop more sustainable engines, fuels & the emerging hydrogen economy.

#### Internal footprint management

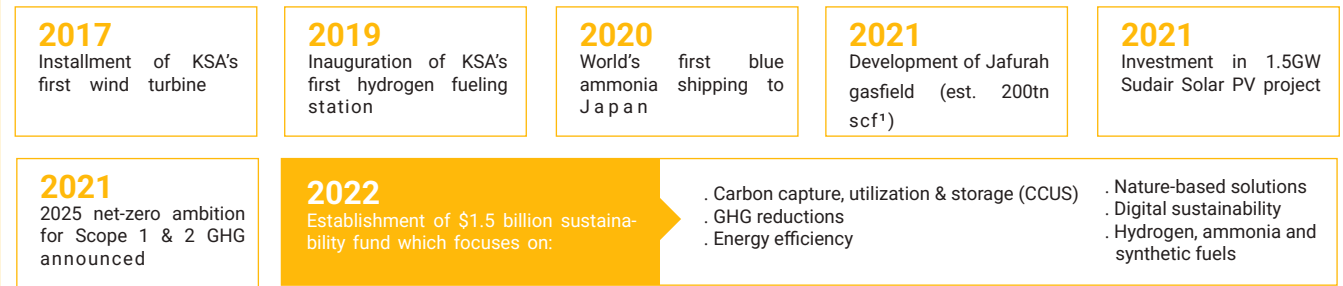


#### External energy transition actions

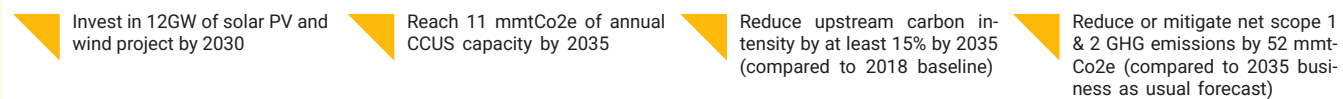


### IMPACT

#### Sustainability Journey



### NEXT STEPS



## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Based on the policy agenda outlined above, Saudi Arabia's focus in the coming years will be on scaling up renewable energy projects, expanding the adoption of electric vehicles, investing in hydrogen production and export, and enhancing energy efficiency across sectors. Further, promoting carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), sustaining hydrocarbons, electrifying rural areas, and leveraging research from institutions like KAPSARC will be essential for achieving the country's Vision 2030 goals. Additionally, the government will further develop the policy framework underpinning the circular economy ecosystem across all regions and sectors, aiming for a holistic circular solution.

The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Build the Kingdom's solar and wind energy capacity and develop the value chain in industries related to solar and wind energy (manufacturing equipment such as solar cells, models, wind turbines, etc.).
- Implement energy efficiency programs targeting the industrial, transportation, and building sectors.
- Invest in hydrogen production facilities, and developing and deploy carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) technologies.
- Promote the growth of the National Energy Services Company (Tarshid) and adapt its operating model to evolving requirements, enabling it to increase in scope and size.

# 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH







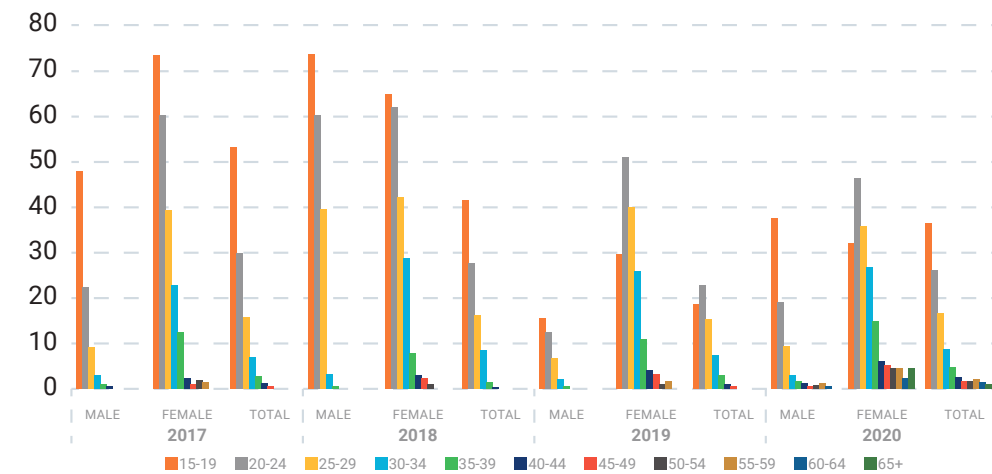
# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia's economy is experiencing fast economic growth, a robust job market and a stable rate of inflation, all indicators of a strong and resilient economy. The dependency on oil revenue has significantly decreased, signaling a shift towards a more diversified economy. The small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) sector has experienced notable growth, receiving increasing startup investments. The labor market has benefitted from the increased participation of women in the labor force.

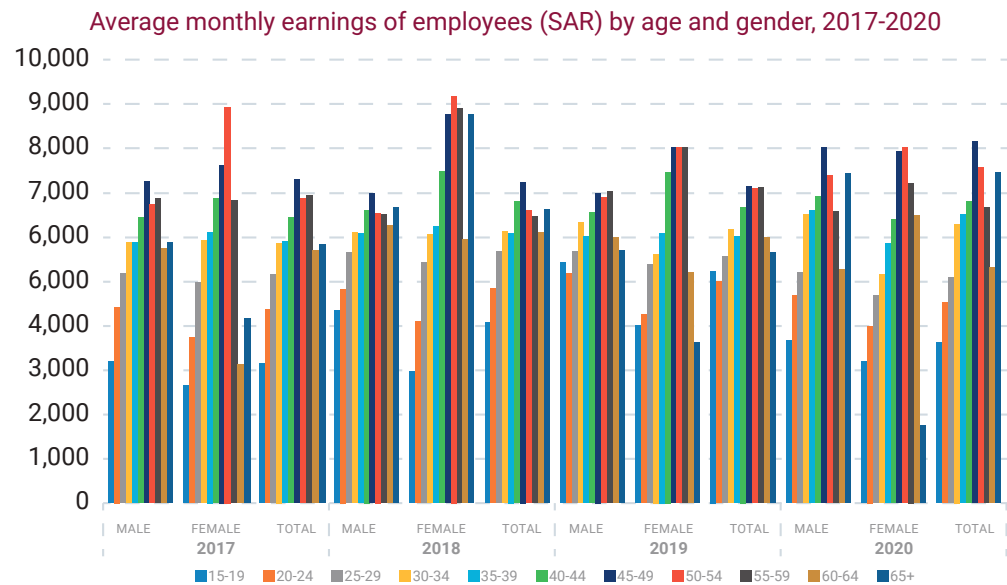
Saudi Arabia's real GDP grew at a rate of 8.7% in 2022, marking the fastest growth among the largest economies. The unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2022 was 8%, indicating the strength of the job market and the economy's ability to create jobs. The inflation rate as of May 2023 was 2.8%, a rather moderate rate of inflation compared to other large economies. That suggests stability in the economy. The direct share of oil in GDP decreased 20 percentage points between 2000 and 2020. In 2020, FDI inflows amounted to \$5.5 billion, representing an increase of 20% compared to 2019. In spite of global economic challenges, Saudi SMEs are thriving, with a 72% increase in startup investments to a record high of \$987 million in 2022. Under Vision 2030, the SME sector in the Kingdom is expected to contribute 35% of the gross domestic product by 2030.

A notable feature of the Saudi Arabian labor market between 2018 and 2022 has been the successful integration of Saudi women into the labor force. The labor force participation rate has been on an increasing trend due to greater participation of women in the labor market. For example, the participation of women in the labor force was 32% in 2020, compared to 19.4% in 2015. The gap between the unemployment rate for men and women has narrowed – as can be seen from the SDG data in the figure below. The data also shows that the highest unemployment rates for both males and females were consistently found within the younger age groups (15-19 and 20-24).

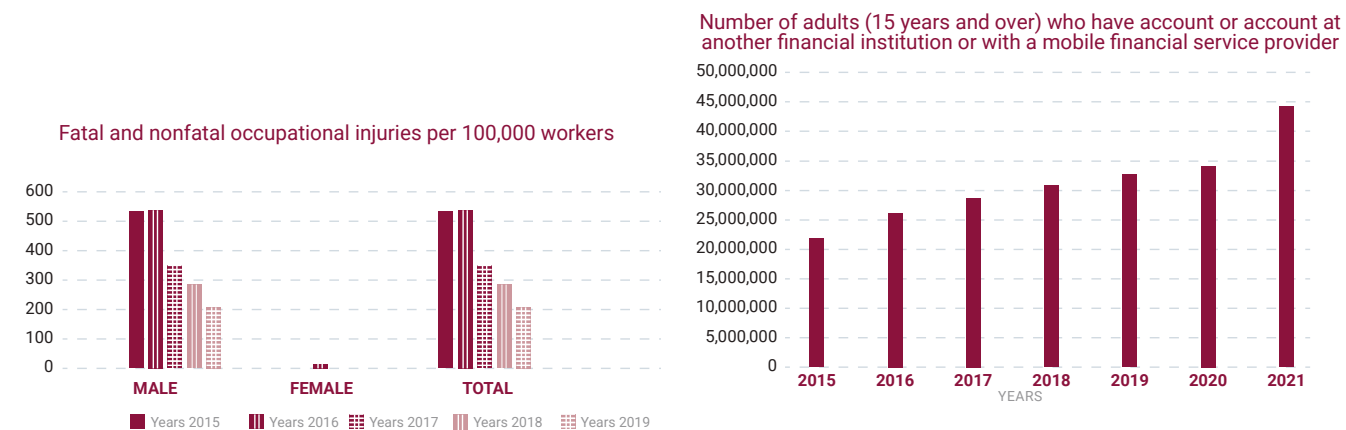
Unemployment rate, by gender



SDG data from GASTAT shows that the average monthly earnings for both male and female employees have increased from 2017 to 2020. The total average monthly earnings increased from SAR 6,093 in 2017 to SAR 6,564 in 2020. In all age groups, the average monthly earnings of male employees were higher than their female counterparts in 2017. However, by 2020, there were some age groups where female employees earned more than males, specifically in the 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, and 64-60 age groups. Also, between 2016 and 2020, male employees consistently worked more hours on average than female employees.



SDG data from GASTAT also shows that the total rate of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries for both male and female workers combined decreased from 536 per 100,000 workers in 2015 to 207 per 100,000 workers in 2019. This demonstrates a general improvement in occupational safety for workers in Saudi Arabia over the five-year period. The data also shows a consistent increase in the number of adults with a bank account or an account at another financial institution from 2015 to 2021. This trend indicates a positive development in financial inclusion and access to formal financial services among the adult population in the country.



# SDG 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: MONSHA'AT

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

**Concept:** The SME General Authority (Monsha'at) was established in 2016 with the aim of regulating, supporting, developing and sponsoring the SME sector in KSA in accordance with global best practices, in order to increase the productivity of SMEs and their contribution to GDP from 20% to 35% by 2030.

**Vision:** To empower SMEs sector to drive the growth of Saudi Arabia's economy and realize Vision 2030 objective and beyond.

**Mission:** Supporting the growth and competitiveness of SMEs by cultivating a growth-oriented entrepreneurial environment and leading collaboration with our strategic partners in public, private, and local and international non-profit sectors.

### Five Strategic Pillars of Monsha'at

**PILLAR I**  
Promotion of Entrepreneurship

**PILLAR II**  
Capability Development

**PILLAR III**  
Growth Increase

**PILLAR IV**  
Opening of Funding Horizons

**PILLAR V**  
Business Facilitation

### IMPACT

**83%** Increase in the number of investors for Saudi startups in Q3/2022 compared to Q3/2021

**970k** Small and medium-sized enterprises in Q3/2022

**221** Billion SAR of funding for SMEs for the first two quarters of 2022

**17,172** Companies benefited from the Kafala program by the end of Q3/2022 (loan risk guarantee program)

**9** New deals with financial institutions with a funding size of 400 million SAR

**48,000** Companies benefited from MAZAYA platform (services platform for competitive service prices)

### NEXT STEPS

Long-Term ambition

**1** Increase the contribution of small and medium enterprises in GDP from 20% to 35% ambition

**2** Increase the private sector participation to the GDP from 45% to 60%

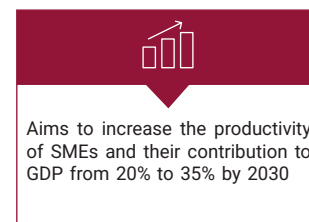
Recent examples to reach the ambition

Monsha'at and Huawei Tech Investment Saudi Arabia will work together to equip Saudi SMEs with the tools to grow and succeed in the e-commerce space.

Monsha'at and the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF) signed a cooperation agreement to support SMEs through their programs Afaq and Tomooh. This enables SIDF's enterprises to benefit from Monsha'at services and programs.

Monsha'at and KAUST have signed an MOU and a membership to the KAUST Industry Collaboration Program (KICP). It will formalize ongoing collaborations while also providing a framework for advancing the entrepreneurship and SME ecosystem in the Kingdom.





- ▶ Mandated with developing, implementing, and supporting programs and projects that foster a culture of self-employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
- ▶ Strives to diversify the funding sources provided to enterprises, supports the initiatives within the venture capital sector, develops policies and standards to fund small and medium projects.

- ▶ Moreover, Monsha'at supports the process of establishing companies specialized in funding, activation and encouraging bank and loan fund to assume a more prominent role in investing and funding enterprises, creating and supporting programs to develop projects, and establishment comprehensive service centers to issue all statutory requirements though in person and virtual participation of public and private stakeholders.

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Vision 2030 targets reducing unemployment to 7% by 2030, with a focus on increasing female labor force participation and implementing measures such as mandatory internships and applied educational programs to align with labor market needs. The policy framework aims to create a dynamic and diversified economy, to increase employment opportunities, and to ensure fair and equal treatment for all workers. The following are some key components of the institutional framework for the labor market in Saudi Arabia:

### ▶ INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE LABOR MARKET IN SAUDI ARABIA

#### National Strategy for Employment

Formulated by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the strategy aims at increasing labor force participation, improving job quality and productivity, and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

#### Labor Market Strategy

This strategy outlines reforms in the public and private sectors and aims at increasing the rate of economic participation, raising skills and productivity and improving market efficiency.

#### Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority (Monsha'at)

Monsha'at supports the SME sector with funding, training, and access to business opportunities, promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation.

#### Labor Reform Initiative (LRI)

In November 2020, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) launched the Labor Reform Initiative (LRI) to enhance the relationship between workers and employers and regulate the Exit and Re-Entry Visa issuance for expatriate workers in the private sector.

#### National Policy to Prevent Child Labor in the Kingdom

In April 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the adoption of the National Policy to Prevent Child Labor in the Kingdom, which aims to provide a safe environment that supports childhood and a society where children enjoy all of their rights. The policy is consistent with the Kingdom's international obligations under the International Labor Organization Conventions No. 138 and 182. In tandem with the policy, Saudi Arabia has also developed a National Action Plan to Prevent Child Labor in the Kingdom.

Additionally, the Saudi government has launched several initiatives to promote job creation and economic growth. They include streamlined commercial registration, expanded vocational training, increased foreign investments, and the launch of the National Program for Crafts and Handicrafts, as well as digital transformation efforts led by the Digital Transformation Unit and the Digital Government Authority. To improve health and safety, the National Strategic Program for Occupational Safety has been launched, focusing on legislation and regulations related to occupational safety and health, and fostering cooperation among employers, workers, and their representatives to enhance workplace conditions. Youth unemployment is a challenge, in response to which the government has launched various initiatives such as training programs and apprenticeships to help young people gain the skills and experience needed to enter the workforce. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has ratified both the ILO Convention No. 95 (Protection of Wages Convention, 1949) and ILO Convention No. 120 (Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964) on December 7, 2020.

The following are some additional ongoing initiatives in support of the labor market:

### ▶ ADDITIONAL ONGOING INITIATIVES

#### National Labor Gateway 'Taqat'

Launched by the Human Resources Development Fund and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Taqat facilitates communication between job seekers and employers and provides training opportunities.

#### Nitaqat Program

This program, also known as "Saudization", aims to increase the number of Saudis employed in the private sector by offering incentives to companies that hire them.

#### Tamweel Portal

Tamweel is an online platform that connects financiers from the public and private sectors with SMEs wishing to obtain financing, enabling them to select the right financing options for their businesses.

#### Quality of Life Program

Several initiatives have been launched under this program to foster private sector investment, human capital development, and inclusive growth in the entertainment, sports, and cultural sectors. These initiatives include encouraging investment in the entertainment sector, localizing human capital in the entertainment industry, involving the private sector in the sports sector's development, and establishing a national cultural fund to support the cultural sector. Additionally, the program focuses on the Saudi program for electronic games, the Saudi Company for Handicrafts, and the Tourism Development Fund. Collectively, these initiatives work towards boosting economic growth, job creation, and enhancing the quality of life for residents through diverse cultural, entertainment, and sports experiences.

#### Innovative Initiatives to Support SMEs

- ▶ The number of SMEs increased from 447,749 in 2016 to 626,669 in 2020.
- ▶ SMEs owned by women grew by 16% points, from 22% in 2016 to 38% in 2020.
- ▶ KSA ranked 7th for expected job creation in the National Entrepreneurship Context Index (NECI), to 29th in 2017.
- ▶ The total share of SMEs financing loans increased by 6.3% points from 2% in 2016 to 8.3% in 2020.
- ▶ The process of establishing integrated e-commerce stores has been simplified to enable start-ups and micro-enterprises to work in e-commerce. 1,000 e-commerce stores were established, with total sales of more than SAR 64 million.
- ▶ Monsha'at, the venture capital initiative launched by the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises, has led the Kingdom's advance to 3rd place regionally for venture capital investment and 12th place in the world.

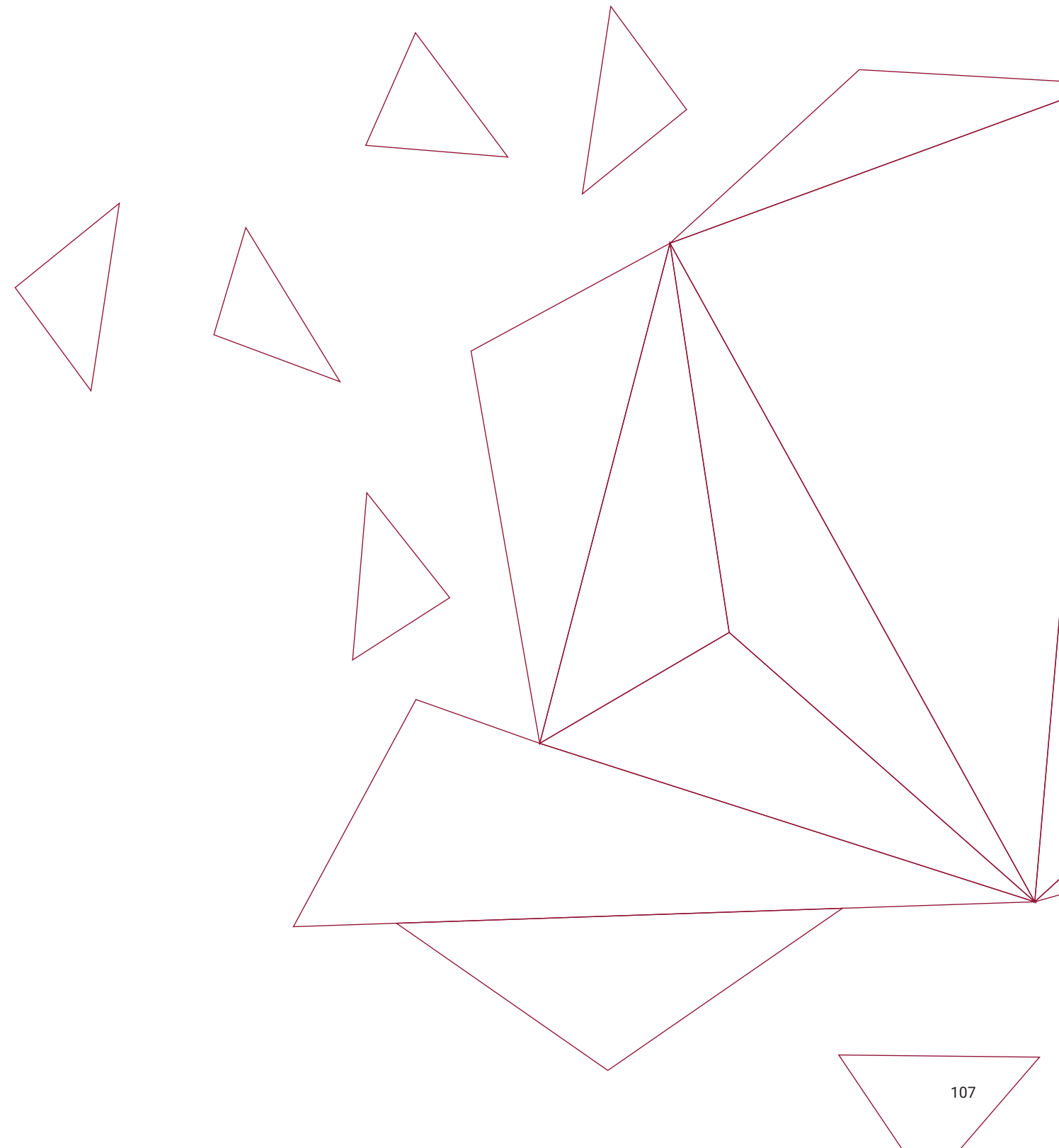


### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Several key issues will receive further attention in this SDG area. Firstly, tackling youth unemployment remains a priority, and concerted efforts will be made to enhance the Human Capability Development Program (HCDP) with targeted initiatives and measures to equip young people with the necessary skills and opportunities for gainful employment. Secondly, the participation of women in the workforce will be further promoted, in line with Vision 2030's goals to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities in the labor market. Moreover, the government will explore innovative approaches to create more and better jobs across various sectors, ensuring quality employment opportunities for the population. This will be achieved by creating public-private partnerships, investing in emerging technologies, and fostering entrepreneurship. The government will also promote further economic diversification to reduce the reliance on oil revenue. This will include targeting promising sectors with high job creation potential, such as renewable energy, tourism, and technology.

Some concrete actions in this area include:

- developing targeted skill-building and vocational training programs for youth.
- implementing policies and initiatives that support and encourage women's participation in the workforce.
- creating incentives and support structures for businesses and startups in sectors with high job creation potential.
- further encouraging public-private partnerships to drive investments in emerging technologies and industries, leading to job creation and economic diversification, and Investing in the development of sustainable industries such as renewable energy, tourism, and technology.



# 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE



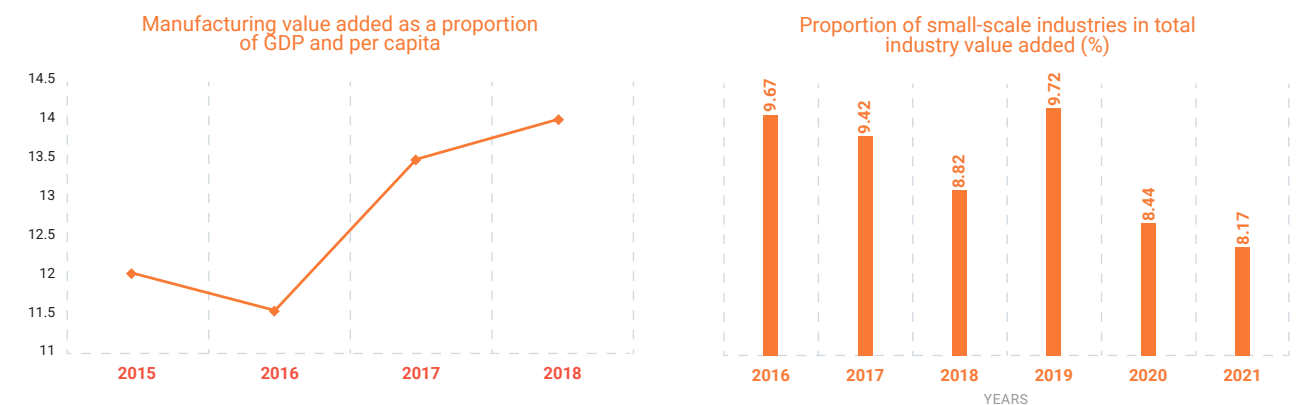


# 1. General Situation

Driven by the key objective of economic diversification, Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in infrastructure and industrial development. The government has extensively promoted innovation in various industries, including a fast digitalization process which is taking place across all sectors. The government has also established various initiatives to support innovation, including funding for research and development, the establishment of technology parks, and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Central to Saudi Arabia's sustainable development plans and programs is the economic diversification of the Kingdom's sources of national income. This is being achieved by increasing the share of other sectors in the gross domestic product. These sectors include the manufacturing, energy, energy-related derivatives, mining, tourism, logistics, and information technology industries.

SDG data from GASTAT suggests that the manufacturing sector has been growing in importance in Saudi Arabia's economy. Its value increased from 12% in 2015 to a peak of 17.58% in 2021, with a slight dip to 13.63% in 2020. This increasing added value suggests that manufacturing has become more critical to Saudi Arabia's economy over time. The data also shows a decline in the proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added from 2016 to 2021. The latter trend suggests that the country's industrial landscape is becoming more exhibiting more large-scale industries.



Based on UNIDO's SDG-9 Industry Index, which measures country's progress on achieving the industry-related targets of SDG-9, Saudi Arabia improved its position from 71st in 2000 to 47th in 2019.<sup>11</sup> This is the result of significant investments by the government in the industrial sector and infrastructure development. The government has introduced various reforms aimed at improving the business environment, including simplifying procedures for starting a business, reducing bureaucracy, and improving access to financing. It is promoting the manufacturing and technology sectors, including the establishment of special economic zones and the promotion of foreign investment. On the infrastructure development front, the government has invested heavily in areas such as the construction of airports, ports, and highways, as well as the development of new industrial and tourism zones. The Kingdom is additionally carrying out multi-billion dollar tourism and entertainment megaprojects, most notably NEOM, Qiddiya, AMAALA, and the Red Sea. The government has also invested in digital infrastructure as a means of improving access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and has established various initiatives to support innovation, including funding for research and development, the establishment of technology parks, and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

	Non-oil revenues	Percentage of non-oil GDP in total GDP	Value of FDI in Saudi Arabia	Number of factories	Percentage of localization in military industries	Time to establish companies and issue commercial registers
Before the Vision	SAR 166 bn	55%	SAR 5.321 bn	7,206 factories	2%	15 Days by 8 government entities
2020	SAR 369 bn	59%	SAR 17.625 bn	9,984 factories	8%	30 Minutes in one step online


<sup>11</sup> The index assesses the countries' level of industrialization while promoting social inclusiveness, minimizing natural resource use and environmental impacts. The scores indicate the dimensions in which countries lead or lag behind other economies, by benchmarking 132 economies over the period 2000-2019.




## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

A key objective of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is to diversify the economy, create jobs, and increase competitiveness. The Vision 2030 outlines long-term economic and social goals centered on developing a diversified, knowledge-based economy and promoting of innovation. The figure below summarizes the vision for industrialization and innovation.


### Key Government Policy Priorities for Industrialization and Innovation




**Encouraging foreign investment in the country's industrial sector** through measures such as tax incentives and investment-friendly regulation.




**Developing industrial clusters** and special economic zones, to provide a supportive environment for the growth and development of industry.




**Supporting research and development** in key industries, such as advanced manufacturing, petrochemicals, and mining, to promote innovation and competitiveness.




**Promoting the use of technology and digitalization** in industry, to improve productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness.



**Encouraging public-private partnerships** to bring together the expertise and resources of the public and private sectors to support industrial development and innovation.



**Increasing foreign investment:** The country has attracted significant foreign investment in various sectors, such as tourism, technology, and renewable energy. For example, the government had established several initiatives, such as the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), to promote foreign investment in the country.



**Improving the business environment:** The government has introduced several measures to improve the business environment, such as the simplification of business regulations and the promotion of entrepreneurship. These measures aim to enhance the completeness of the country's economy and to support the growth of the private sector.

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### APPLYING THE CONCEPT OF URBAN MANAGEMENT AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

#### SUMMARY

Urban development has been a key theme of Vision 2030 under the responsibility of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. Focus has been put towards implementing the New Urban Agenda and promoting sustainable growth and development. It aims to focus on urban development through three themes:

- ### 1

Environmentally Sustainable and resilient Urban development

### 2

Social Inclusion


### 3

Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all


Applying the concept of urban management and development, under the New Urban Agenda, aims to promote housing growth, ease approval of residential plans, provide sustainable and financially feasible housing solutions and increase digitalization of municipal solutions. Finally, through urban management and planning the Kingdom wants to ensure infrastructure accessibility for all.

#### IMPACT


Multiple projects started under urban management and development resulted in:




Housing sector growth rate reached 204%




Home ownership grew to 60% in 2020



Developed worker's housing regulations which provided better living conditions

- 

70% less in person visits due to the digitalization of municipal and urban services.
- 

The unified e-gate "Baladi" helped to reduce time to approve residential plans from 2 years to 60 days and time to issue licenses to less than 17 days.

#### NEXT STEPS

Defining next step was done according to Vision 2030 and SDG Agenda, to ensure efforts and put towards the two flagship priorities.

Vision 2030 and SDG agenda targets set for urban development and management:

- . Increasing home ownership to 70%
- . Reach 80% satisfaction with city's cleanliness
- . Developing a sophisticated digital infrastructure to improve urban actions
- . Providing efficient and sustainable public transport
- . Implement a climate adaptation strategy for urban development

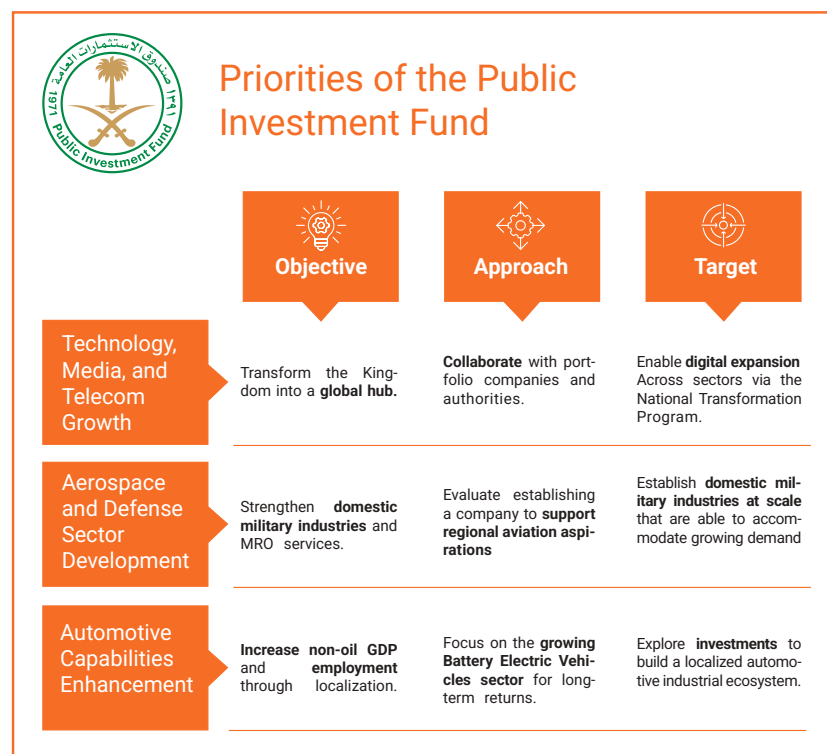
All programs under new urban agenda need to cooperate together to reach SDG and Vision 2030 targets

## KEY COMPONENTS OF SAUDI ARABIA'S INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORT INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

### Public Investment Fund

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is a key national institution that has contributed to establishing vital local companies. Gaining greater autonomy and strategic responsibilities in 2015 under the Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA), PIF now plays a pivotal role in realizing the economic transformation program under Vision 2030. As a global impactful investor, PIF manages a world-class investment portfolio targeting sustainable investments, both domestically and internationally, and has created 77 companies across 13 strategic sectors, generating over 500,000 direct and indirect jobs. With its mission to maximize sustainable long-term returns and enable the economic development and diversification of the Saudi economy, PIF aims to become a global investment powerhouse and the world's most impactful investor.

In addition to PIF, a range of institutions and policies have been launched by the government in support of Saudi Arabia's industrial development, investment, and innovations.



### National Investment Strategy

Launched in October 2021, the strategy aims to boost the Kingdom's global competitiveness by fostering investment opportunities, streamlining the business environment, and bolstering its position on the global investment map.

### Saudi Authority for Industrial Cities and Technology Zones (MODON)

The entity oversees the development of industrial lands, integrated infrastructure, and 36 industrial cities across the Kingdom, while also managing private industrial complexes and areas.

### Saudi Industrial Development Fund

The fund serves as the primary financial catalyst for the Industrial Development and Logistics Program, expediting and automating lending processes while offering financing products and programs tailored to investors in growing sectors.

### ICT Sector Strategy

The strategy focuses on enhancing the Kingdom's digital prowess in communications and information technology, attracting foreign investments, and charting facilitating innovation and digitalization.



### National Digital Transformation Strategy

The strategy encompasses a range of government-led initiatives to expand broadband internet coverage, foster new technology development, and stimulate e-commerce growth, aiming to enhance overall ICT accessibility.

### National Strategy for Transportation and Logistics

Launched in 2021, the strategy seeks to establish Saudi Arabia as a global logistics hub connecting three continents, while upgrading transportation services, fostering integration within the logistics system, and embracing modern transportation methods.

### Research Development and Innovation Authority

The entity promotes cutting-edge research, technological advancements, and innovation to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life in Saudi Arabia.

**KSA in the Digital Competitiveness Index**

The Kingdom was the most advanced country in digital competitiveness amongst G20 countries for the past three years, according to the "Digital Progress" report issued by the European Center for Digital Competitiveness. It also ranked 9th in the Digital Capabilities Index and 3rd among the G20 countries in the regulatory framework for adopting business technologies, according to the World Economic Forum.

**Fastest 5G internet in the world**

The Kingdom ranked 1st in the world for 5G internet speed in 2020. More than 12,000 5G towers have been deployed covering more than 60% of major cities and more than 45% of all cities.

### King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST)

KACST promotes research and development in science and technology and supports the development of new technologies and innovations.

In addition to the institutional framework described above, the government has launched several initiatives to develop the industry, improve the infrastructure, and promote innovations. The following provides a summary of these initiatives .

### National Technology Development Program

Contributes to the Kingdom's technology ecosystem by promoting sustainable growth through various interventions and support mechanisms, working alongside other stakeholders to enhance enablers that drive tech market growth and position the Kingdom as a regional hub for innovation and investment in the sector.

### Invest in Saudi

Platform was launched to promote the investment environment and the competitive advantages of the Kingdom. It operates as a unified platform for all sectors to market investment opportunities to the international business community.

### Q-Tech

Launched by the Digital Government Authority in October 2021, the program seeks to advance digital transformation in the Kingdom's government sector by fostering human capabilities and skills through collaborations with the Saudi Digital Academy, the Future Skills Program, and top international universities like MIT and Columbia Business School, offering multiple tracks including digital leadership, digital skills, and professional and electronic training.

### Garage

This joint effort by KACST, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and the Saudi Federation for Cyber Security, Programming, and Drones (SAFCSP), serves as a collaborative innovation hub supporting deep-tech entrepreneurs through incubation programs, investment facilitation, and grants. The initiative seeks to foster an environment that attracts top talent and propels the Kingdom's entrepreneurial ecosystem and technological progress.

### Maeen Network

Founded by KACST in 2010, the Saudi Research and Innovation Network, is a specialized infrastructure facility that bridges the gap between research and innovative institutes in the Kingdom, along with their international counterparts using high-speed backbone network and provides facility infrastructure. Maeen Network is an enabler to achieving better engagement and collaboration with the global research sector, higher development, and expeditious innovation.

### In-Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA)

The Program aims to increase the localization of industrial production and reduce the country's dependence on imports.

### Upskilling Initiatives for Saudi Talent

Saudi Arabia has invested in upskilling initiatives to boost domestic talent with a focus on enhancing digital skills and future competencies. Key programs include Tuwaiq Camp 1000, the Future Skills initiative, which offers intensive training in digital fields like communication technology, information security, and data science. The Tech Entrepreneurship Support Initiative, aimed at reducing risks for IT entrepreneurs. Additionally, the Saudi Digital Library has been created to facilitate research publication, while the Technology Development Financing Initiative provides financial guarantees of up to SAR 15 million to support the growth of tech startups and SMEs.

### The Kingdom's Broadband Network

**60%**

Urban areas covered with FTTH

**70%**

Remote areas covered with high-speed wireless broadband networks

### Broadband Internet Speed

From  
**135th**  
2017



To  
**Top 10**  
2023



# 4 NEW SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES LAUNCHED BY HRH CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN

## Industrial Clusters Program

This program is a government initiative designed to stimulate the growth and development of five key industries in Saudi Arabia, including the manufacture of cars and their parts, steel and other metals, solar energy, plastic and packaging materials, and home appliances. Supervised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, this program aims to diversify the Kingdom's sources of income and create job opportunities for both male and female citizens.

## Saudi Incubators, Accelerators, and Technology Parks

This is a network of business incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and other stakeholders focused on fostering the Kingdom's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The network aims to be the go-to destination for local and international audiences interested in exploring and participating in this ecosystem. Its mission is to create an impactful, sustainable, and empowering entrepreneurial community. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in developing technology parks and innovation centers, which serve as hubs for research, development, incubation, and acceleration of startups. These centers provide a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, researchers, and innovators, helping to cultivate a culture of innovation throughout the country. A key example of industrial parks is the PlasChem Park, a world-class industrial park in Jubail Industrial City II for chemical and conversion industries utilizing Sadara's products and other raw materials. The 12 km<sup>2</sup> site, adjacent to Sadara's manufacturing complex, will feature two sections: the Chemical Park and the Conversion Park. PlasChem tenants, such as Baker Hughes and SADIG-ILCO, will receive feedstock through Sadara's EO/PO pipeline and use energy converted from Sadara's waste by the Veolia Project.



Benefits to Companies	Benefits to the Kingdom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive corporate tax rates</li> <li>100% foreign ownership of companies</li> <li>Flexibility to hire foreign labor</li> <li>Duty-free imports of machinery and raw materials</li> <li>Seamless set-up procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generating tens of thousands of jobs</li> <li>Creating new hubs for businesses</li> <li>Localizing supply chains</li> <li>Supporting key sectors including logistics and technology</li> <li>Reinforcing KSA as a global business hub</li> <li>Increasing the Kingdom's export competitiveness</li> </ul>
Key Targeted Sectors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cloud Computing</li> <li>Food Processing</li> <li>Marine Industrials services</li> <li>Logistics</li> <li>Manufacturing and Mining</li> <li>Electric Vehicles</li> </ul>	

## Ecosystem of Business Incubators and Accelerators in Saudi Arabia



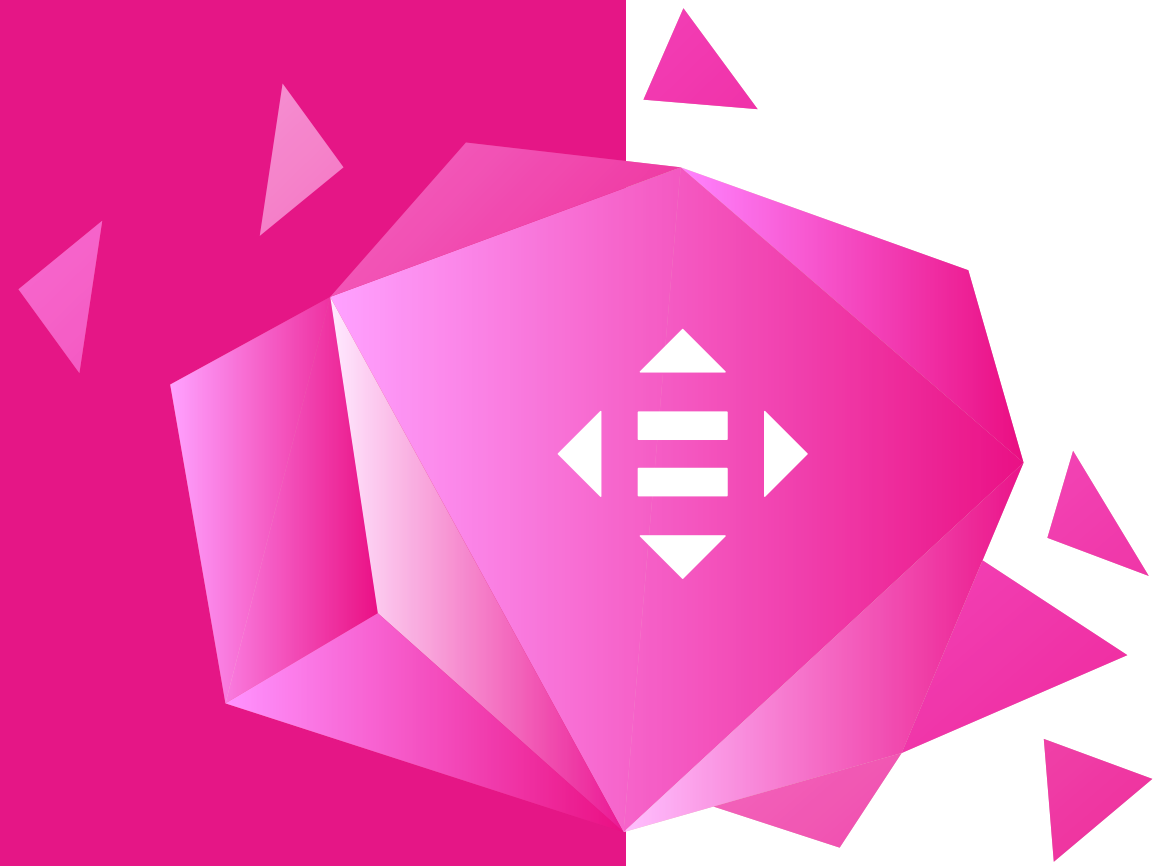
## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The focus of public policy in the years ahead will be on further strengthening the efforts in industrial and infrastructure development and innovation. Expanding human capital development, particularly in skills enhancement, as well as research and development, and fostering a culture of innovation are two other key directions. Moreover, the government will continue to attract private sector and foreign investment in research and development. Emphasis will be placed on increasing value-added per capita and employment opportunities in various sectors, such as manufacturing, energy, mining, tourism, logistics, and information technology. Innovation will be promoted by encouraging collaboration, investing in research and development, providing companies with access to resources and mentorship, and cultivating a culture of creativity and exploration. Furthermore, support will be provided to small and medium-sized enterprises through schemes such as the Garage Initiative with the goal of creating a thriving startup community.

The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Enhance human capital development by providing skill enhancement programs, and research and development opportunities, as well as fostering a culture of innovation.
- Attract private sector and foreign investment in research and development to boost the growth of key industries and sectors.
- Support small and medium-sized enterprises by offering access to resources, mentorship, and incubation programs, such as the Garage Initiative.
- Strengthen the overall support ecosystem for startups by facilitating access to funding, and market opportunities.
- Develop and expand technology parks and innovation centers as hubs for research, development, and acceleration of startups to provide a supportive environment for entrepreneurs, researchers, and innovators.
- Continue to invest in infrastructure development, including digital infrastructure, to improve access to information and communication technologies and enable the growth of the digital economy.
- Invest in upskilling initiatives for Saudi talent, with a focus on enhancing digital skills and future competencies, to support the growth of the digital economy and technology sectors.
- Encourage collaboration between academic institutions, research centers, and industry partners to accelerate innovation and drive economic growth across various sectors.

# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES





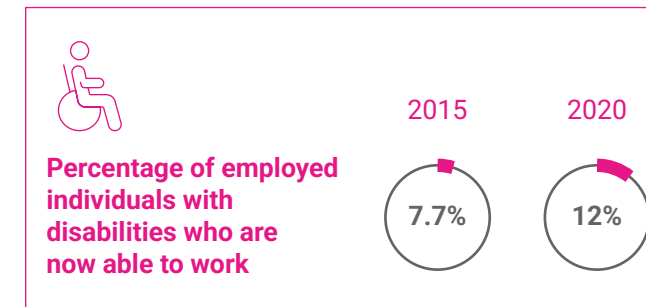


# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has demonstrated significant progress in the areas of social inclusion and ending poverty, access to adequate housing and access to basic services. Under the Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program, the government has taken steps to reduce income inequality, particularly through social safety nets and poverty reduction programs.

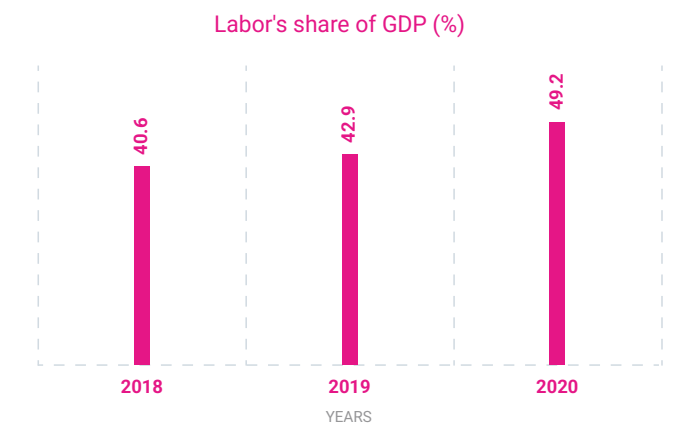
Saudi Arabia has made significant contributions towards the achievement of **SDG 10** by implementing a number of initiatives to promote economic growth and reduce poverty. The government has committed to improving existing programs and establishing new initiatives in the areas of social insurance, social safety nets and labor market support programs. Saudi Arabia has achieved near universal access when it comes to public services such as education, healthcare, electricity, water and sanitation.

Low-income households and other vulnerable groups are provided with social protection services and opportunities to improve their standard of living. The government provides subsidies and financing options to help low-income families access affordable and sustainable housing. Efforts are underway to introduce new technologies for more efficient and effective service delivery as well as to shift towards more sustainable and cost-effective models.

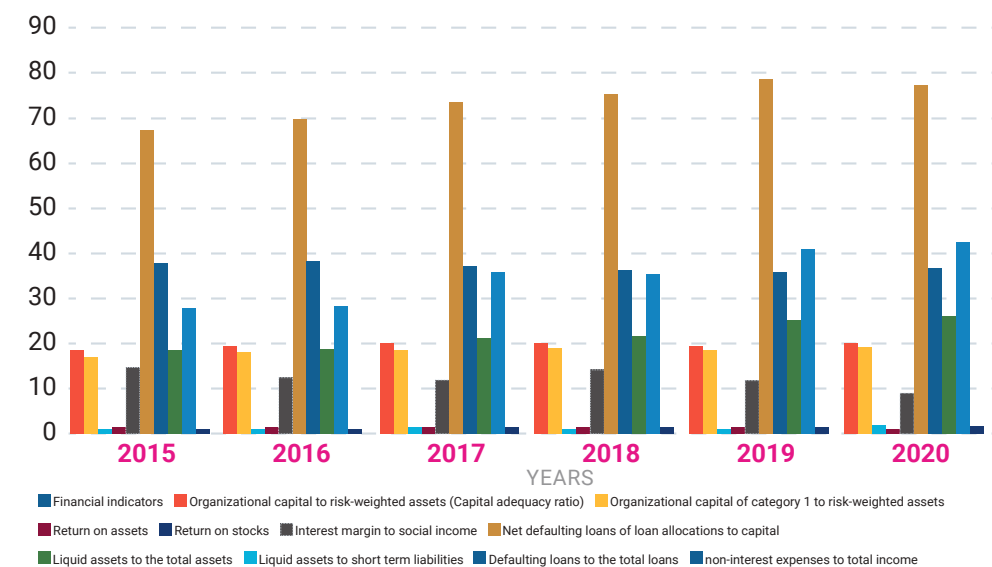


The data for the labor share of GDP shows an increase from 40.6% in 2018 to 49.2% in 2020,

a trend that indicates a growing share of the country's economic output being attributed to labor, which has positive implications for income distribution, living standards, and the balance between labor and capital in the economy.



## Financial soundness indicators (%)





From 2015 to 2021, the capital adequacy ratio in Saudi Arabia increased from 18.1% to 19.9%, showing a growth in banks' financial stability and resilience to risks during this period. Liquid assets as a percentage of total assets increased from 17.5% in 2015 to 24.7% in 2021, indicating improved liquidity in the banking sector. The ratio of liquid assets to short-term liabilities increased from 27.3% in 2015 to 41.3% in 2021, suggesting enhanced liquidity and the ability to meet short-term obligations. Overall, the banking sector has demonstrated improved financial stability, resilience, and liquidity.

### Measures taken by the Saudi government to reduce inequalities



Programs to support small and medium sizes enterprises (SMEs) and encourage entrepreneurship, which contribute to reducing income inequality and promoting inclusive economic growth.



Investment in infrastructure and transportation projects to improve connectivity and accessibility, reduce regional disparities and increase economic opportunities.



Initiatives to increase access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs.



Measures to promote the right of workers and improve working conditions, including the introduction of a minimum wage



Measures to improve the education and training system with the aim of increasing employability and reducing the skills gap.



Measures to address discrimination against marginalized groups, such as migrant workers, and to ensure their rights are protected.

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia has taken important steps to strengthen human rights. The Saudi Human Rights Commission is the government agency tasked with protecting and promoting human rights in accordance with international human rights standards in all fields, spreading awareness of it, and contributing to ensuring its application in line with the provisions of Islamic Law.<sup>16</sup> The Commission has been granted broad powers to perform its duties independently and freely<sup>12</sup>.

### ► Saudi Human Rights Commission

Among the government's efforts to preserve human rights in the Kingdom is the establishment of an independent human rights body, the Human Rights Commission, directly linked to the Prime Minister, which is mandated to protect and promote human rights in accordance with international human rights standards in all fields, to ensure that the concerned government agencies implement the regulations in force with regard to human rights, to detect abuses that violate the regulations in force in the Kingdom that constitute a violation of human rights, and to take the necessary legal measures in this regard.

<sup>12</sup> The Human Rights Commission was established under the "Regulation of the Human Rights Commission" issued by Cabinet Resolution No. (207) dated 8/8/1426 AH.

<sup>16</sup> The Human Rights Commission was established under the "Regulation of the Human Rights Commission" issued by Cabinet Resolution No. (207) dated 8/8/1426 AH.

The government has established human rights departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Presidency of State Security and other official bodies. Additionally, the Kingdom has launched the Women's Rights Observatory to monitor progress and has established a Human Rights Training Center. Moreover, the government has intensified its efforts to strengthen the role of civil society. The Kingdom has made widespread changes to its laws and regulations to address systemic discrimination and ensure accountability for human rights abuses. For example, the country has passed laws that criminalize discrimination and hate speech. Over the past few years, Saudi Arabia has ratified several international conventions and launched numerous initiatives. In 2018, Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The government has also launched several initiatives to promote awareness and compliance with human rights principles, such as the Saudi Human Rights Network.

The box below summarizes key social protection measures introduced by the Saudi government in support of the needy and vulnerable segments of society.

### ► KEY SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT

**The National Family Strategy** was introduced in 2020 to outline essential priorities concerning children, women, and the elderly for policy and program development. The Family Affairs Council is working with various ministries to develop policies under this strategy, such as the Anti-Bullying Policy and the National Framework on Child Online Safety.

**The National Family Safety Program** seeks to protect families from violence, monitor abuse cases, and inform appropriate authorities. Additionally, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has developed a draft family Protection Strategy. A hotline has been established for reporting domestic violence incidents.

**The government is currently developing several national frameworks in support of child protection:** The early stages of development include a hospital response system for child maltreatment cases entering the medical system. The system includes an electronic registry of cases. The detection system is a critical source of data and indicates a concerted effort to respond to child abuse and neglect. This data management and case tracking system had informant legislative frameworks, including the 2011 protection for Abuse Act as well as the 2015 Child Protection from Abuse Act. Exemplary organizations and institutions have emerged as champions for child protection during this era, including the Family Affairs Council, the National Family Safety Program, the Human Rights Commission, the National Committee for Children, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Commerce and Investment, the Office of Public Prosecution, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development.

In 2021, **the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons** was launched to address child protection concerns. In March 2020, the Human Rights Commission and the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT) collaborated with the United Nations to implement a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of human trafficking. This effort coincided with the establishment of specialized courts, legal prosecution teams, police officers, and labor inspectors to monitor vulnerable workers, including domestic employees. These teams contribute to enhancing support and protection within the NRM, which also features an effective central and provincial complaint mechanism.

The government has also launched an array of initiatives, programs, and centers that provide people with disabilities and the elderly with preventive and social services that are provided in the family and social environment. In addition, support programs provide financial subsidies and specific medical devices for people with disabilities. The Authority for the Care of Persons with Disabilities was established in 2018 with the aim of ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain their rights and have full access to enhanced services provided by the authorities. The “Quality of Life” Program’s initiative “Developing Paralympic Sports” aims to promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in sports activities in Saudi Arabia. This is achieved by supporting sports federations and clubs, raising national awareness, and improving training quality. The initiative also focuses on preparing clubs and facilities to meet the needs of elite athletes with disabilities, with the ultimate goal of competing in the Paralympic Games.

Launched in January 2022 by the Authority for Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the “Training and Employment for People with Disabilities” project is a key initiative of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 strategic plan. As of May 2023, the project has trained 1221 disabled job seekers and increased the employment rate for people with disabilities from 7.7% to 12.4%, working towards a target of 80% job placement and sustainability.



## ▶ ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF VULNERABLE SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY

### Labor Reform Initiative (LRI)

Launched in November 2020 by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD), the initiative enhances the relationship between workers and employers and regulates the exit and re-entry visa issuance for expatriate workers in the private sector.

### National Policy to Prevent Child Labor

The policy provides the framework for a safe environment that supports childhood and children's rights.

### National Policy for Occupational Safety and Health

Developed by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD), the policy creates a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, including Saudi nationals and expatriate workers.

### ILO Protocol on Forced Labor

In May 2021, Saudi Arabia ratified the ILO Protocol on Forced Labor (P.29), becoming the 52nd country worldwide and the first among GCC states to ratify this instrument. Through it, the country committed to take effective measures to prevent forced labor, sanction its perpetrators, and protect its victims and ensure their access to justice and remedies.

### Housing program (Sakani)

The Development Housing Program, part of the Sakani initiative, collaborates with the non-profit sector to address the housing needs of underprivileged families. By attracting private investment, it aims for long-term stability and sustainability. The program is involved in rehabilitating over 350 residential communities across Saudi Arabia. Sakani offers various housing solutions, allowing eligible citizens to choose suitable options through simple steps. The program focuses on providing housing, financing solutions, and improving the first-time home buying experience. The Sakani platform serves as a digital hub for housing-related services and products, enabling users to explore available units and designs. The Sakani Comprehensive Center connects clients with real estate developers, sales and financing agencies, and housing services.

### ROSHN

Is a flagship project that aims to increase homeownership levels by delivering hundreds of thousands of residential units across the Kingdom, including areas like Riyadh, Makkah, Aseer, and the Eastern Region. With a plan to develop over 395,000 units on more than 181 km<sup>2</sup> of land, ROSHN will create complete townships encompassing retail, entertainment, and workspace, hosting over 2 million residents. By 2030, the project is expected to contribute over SAR 212 billion to the nation’s GDP and create more than 101,000 direct jobs. ROSHN’s mission aligns with the housing program’s goal of raising homeownership among Saudi citizens to 70% by 2030.

### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

In the next few years, the Saudi government will further its efforts on social inclusion. Particular emphasis will be placed on fine-tuning social protection measures to ensure better targeting of those in need and further reduce disparities in social services, especially in rural and remote communities. Further efforts will be made on expanding and improving programs and initiatives to provide assistance to people with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups, ensuring their full inclusion and access to essential services. Also, the focus will be on expanding and improving homeownership levels, creating more residential units, and providing affordable housing options for low-income families and vulnerable populations. Fostering youth engagement and empowerment through education, skill development, and employment opportunities will be another key area of engagement. Furthermore, the Kingdom will continue its engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

### IN-DEPTH CASE

## SDG 10 REDUCES INEQUALITIES: SAUDI HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FUND

### SUMMARY



The Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) was established in 2000 and falls under the Saudi National Development Fund (NDF). It aims to establish a mechanism to contribute to building a productive, sustainable, and qualified Saudi workforce. It also aims to raise the skills of Saudi citizens to enable them to contribute to the development of the national economy.



Vision: Productive and adaptive national human resources



Mission: To develop and increase the employability of the national human resources through high-impact interventions offered in partnership with the key labor market stakeholders.

### HRDF program examples

#### Qurrah:

A program aiming to increase the percentage of Saudi women working in the private sector and contribute to the stability of Saudi women in their jobs through provision of centers for nurseries and daycare for children.

#### Wusool:

A transportation program for working women aiming to enable women to work in the private sector and help them to overcome transportation difficulties to and from the workplace.

### IMPACT

HRDF – Overall	HRDF - Qurrah	HRDF - Wusool
52,918 recruitments in 2019	1,755 beneficiaries in 2019	44,987 beneficiaries in 2019
132,516 recruitments in 2021	3,090 beneficiaries in 2021	48,353 beneficiaries in 2021

### NEXT STEPS

#### Revamp of strategy:

- Supporting the development of human resources in line with labor market needs
- Increasing efficiency of matching supply and demand for jobs
- Enabling groups facing challenges to enter, or remain in the labor market

Three pillars of guidance, training, empowerment with eight programs:

- Training support
- Work-based training
- E-training
- Vocational guidance
- Functional alignment
- Income support
- Empowerment
- Jobseekers assistance



# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



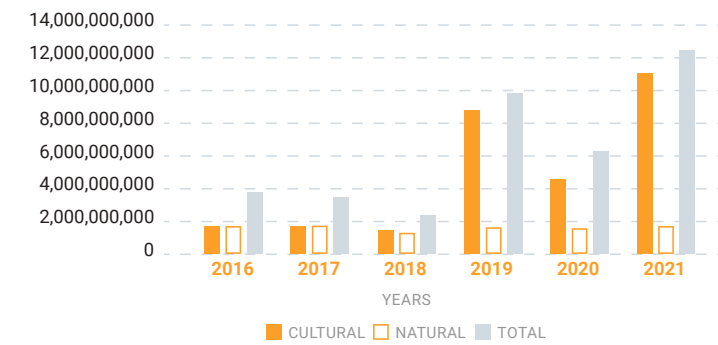


# 1. General Situation

Significant efforts have been made recently to promote inclusive, safe, and resilient cities in Saudi Arabia. The country has made progress in urban development - improving urban planning and infrastructure, promoting sustainable housing, protecting heritage sites, and enhancing the resilience of cities and settlements against natural disasters. The government has launched several initiatives to improve urban planning and infrastructure, promote sustainable transportation, and enhance the management of waste and natural resources.

SDG data from GASTAT figure below shows a significant increase in spending, particularly for cultural heritages, this reflect the government's commitment to preserving and promoting the country's unique heritage resources.

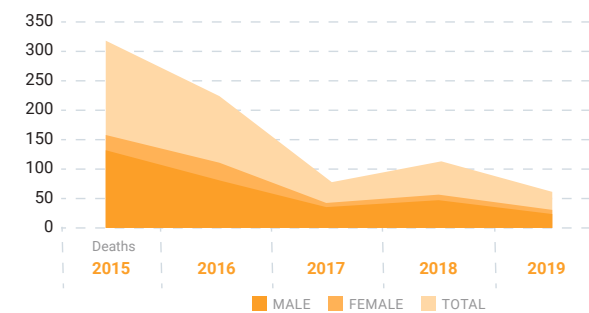
Government expenditure on cultural and natural heritage (SAR)



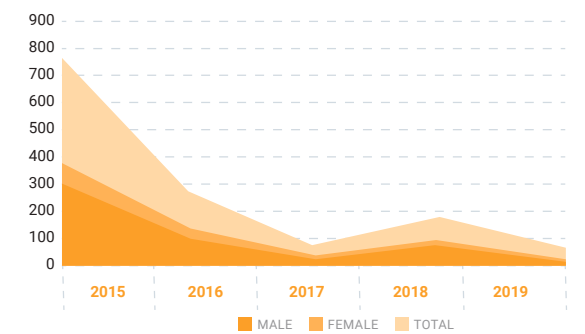
The data from GASTAT also shows a significant decrease in both deaths and injuries due to disasters from 2015 to 2019.

This decline indicates an improvement in disaster management and response, as well as the possible implementation of effective policies and infrastructure to mitigate the impact of disasters on the population.

Deaths due disasters per 100,000 population by gender

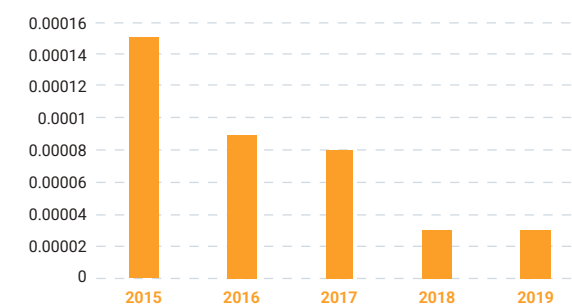


Injuries due disasters per 100,000 population by gender



SDG data from GASTAT also shows that from 2015 to 2019, the percentage of economic loss due to disasters has decreased.

Percent population, agriculture and economic loss





## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

As part of Vision 2030, the Kingdom has launched a series of large-scale projects aimed at reimagining all aspects of urban development. Urban development in the Kingdom is underpinned by the **National Urban Development Strategy**, which promotes sustainable urban development by improving urban planning, governance and management. The strategy prioritizes measures that enhance the resilience of cities, reduce environmental pollution and promote socio-economic integration.<sup>13</sup> The **“Quality of Life Program”** addresses aspects like cultural heritage

preservation, housing development, municipal services, and urban beautification. The program aims to create sustainable, modern communities that improve residents’ well-being, promote cultural preservation and, environmental friendliness, and foster tourism development. In 2022, Saudi Arabia issued the King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism, which serves as a strategic foundation for urbanization and the future of architecture. It also sets forth a design methodology that highlights Saudi Arabia’s history and culture while also serving as a guide for decision-makers, specialists, and those interested in architecture and urbanism. The **King Salman Center for Local Governance (CLG)**, which is affiliated with Prince Sultan University, conducts research and studies, provides advisory services, host events, and designs specialized management training courses. The Center runs the King Salman Award for Local Governance in the Arab World in cooperation with the Arab Development Administrative Organization, as well as hosting special projects such as the Saudi Government Digital Map. The Center is the first think tank in the Kingdom specialized in local governance and is recognized as the first non-profit research center that combines theory and practice.

During the 2019-2022 period, the government established several royal commissions in areas of strategic importance, including for religious, culture and heritage, and industrial purposes.<sup>14</sup> The government has invested heavily in urban development, including infrastructure components such as transportation, waste management, housing, and healthcare. To improve urban mobility, the government has focused on improving public transportation and investing in metro systems, bus networks, and bike lanes. The government has launched several initiatives that promote sustainable transportation, such as metro systems, bus networks, and bike lanes, and reduce the use of personal vehicles, improve accessibility and mobility in cities, and improve the efficiency of transportation. The Kingdom has developed the metro and bus network in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam, which will provide significant sustainability, environmental and public health benefits.

The government has expanded the King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and has started the construction of the metro system in Riyadh, which is in the process of becoming operational. The newly built Riyadh metro and bus network will save thousands of car journeys and liters of fuel daily. In addition, the Saudi Railway network will be expanded to connect major cities and ports which will result in reductions in traffic and GHG emissions.



### Launching the Municipal Investment Portal FORAS

More than  
**23,000**  
investor

FORAS is a communication channel between municipalities and investors which has registered more than 23,000 investors and reduced the requirements for investor visits by 90%.

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### CITIES: URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN RIYADH, AL MADINAH AND AL ULA

#### SUMMARY

##### Riyadh

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has committed to building the concepts of resilience, mitigation and adaptation into the planning and management of its cities and villages. Riyadh is leading the way in sustainable development, is currently in the process of planting more than 7.5 million trees across the city and increasing the amount of green space per capita from 1.7 m<sup>2</sup> to 28 m<sup>2</sup>. Other projects include

- Accelerating the social sector with the Riyadh Foundation
- Riyadh Art Project aiming at acquiring 1000+ artworks and hosting world-class exhibitions and festivals
- Hosting of World Expo 2030

##### Al Madinah

Al Madinah is a city in western Saudi Arabia and a major Islamic pilgrimages site. It’s also a site of multiple transformations, from the implementation of smart city strategy (to boost standards for its citizens and visitors, reduce costs and contribute more to Saudi GDP) to setting up of the Urban Data Platform intended for use in planning, development and disaster management. The effects of these projects is widely observable across a range of domains.

##### Al Ula

In 2018, Al Ula found itself at the center of widespread transformations being part of Vision 2030. With the assistance of both local and international experts, efforts are taking place to preserve and enhance the natural, historic and cultural features of Al Ula while positively contributing to the quality of life of its populace and local economy at large.

#### IMPACT

- Models show mean temperature to be reduced by 8°C to 15°C
- Annual Pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of 3-6%
- As part of Integrated Strategy for Waste Management, Riyadh launched an experiment in 2019 to replace single bin with double bins to separate inorganic and organic materials and to cut down on waste in landfills
- With King Abdelaziz Public Transport Program, Riyadh is set to open its integrated metro system comprised of 176 km of track, 85 stations, 24 bus rapid transit lines with 6,700 bus stops and 25 park and ride stations across the city
- Riyadh developed a program to identify, diagnose and address the challenges surrounding informal areas

**The Urban Data Platform:**

- Provides flood modeling service. Users can simulate various scenarios, identify vulnerable sites, and review solutions spatially to manage risk.
- Limits the urban sprawl in the agricultural farms
- Reduce surveying costs by reducing the need for the site visits
- Saved SAR 42.9M while planning the Qeba plaza, increasing the district’s walkability
- Stores go-to reference data for the support of major planning, development and risk environment activities in the region

The Al Ula program shows tangible results across a range of domains, especially traceable across SDGs 8, 11, 13 and 15.

Within the 4 years since 2018, the **average monthly income per capita nearly doubled**, with the growth rate of total amount of new jobs generated estimated at **~346%**.

Promising early results were also reported on a number of environmental variables such as 91, 264 trees planted so far, and 298 animals released to nature reserves.

#### NEXT STEPS

- Greening per capita to be raised from 1.7 m<sup>2</sup> to 28 m<sup>2</sup>
- Green space to increase from 1.5% to 9.1%, planting 7.5 million trees
- ~SAR 50-60 billion added to GDP
- 100-150K+ new jobs in the social sector in Riyadh
- 3,000+ new NPOs

Efforts are made to rationalize and reduce government spending and integrate the Urban Data Platform with the National Databank. Al Madinah is at the forefront of this, preparing its infrastructure to be ready for cloud migration by May 2023.

Al Ula aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035, and the stability of emissions per capita between 2020 and 2035. To aid that effort, the city introduces a CO<sub>2</sub> emissions tracking and monitoring tool and a satellite system for biomass monitoring.

<sup>13</sup> From the Saudi government (Gov.sa) platform (website).

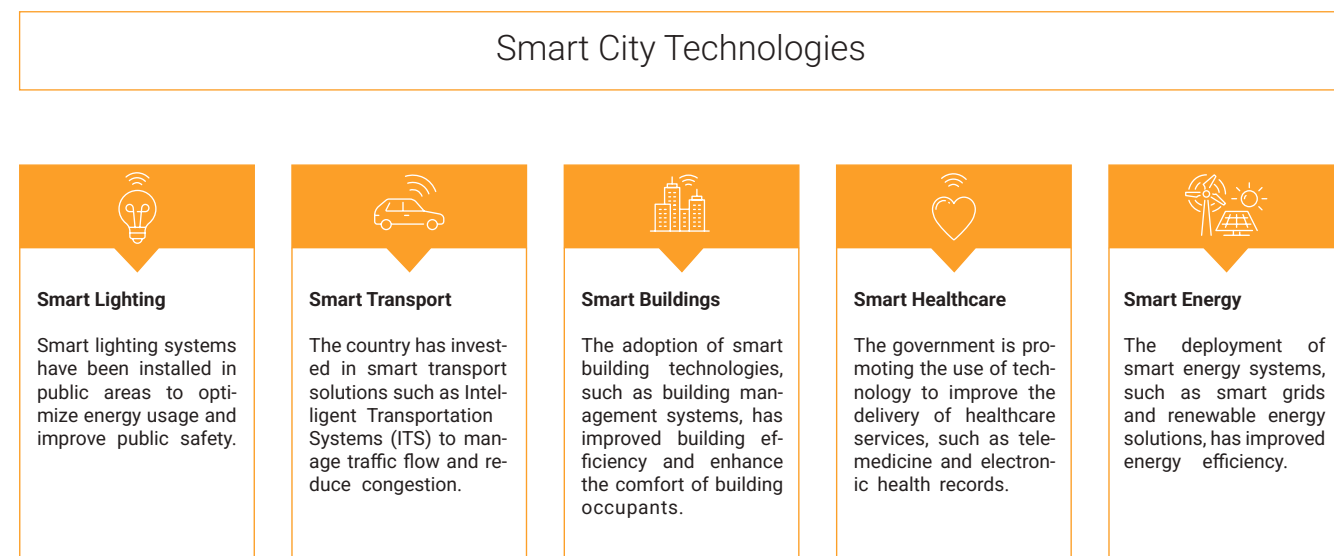
<sup>14</sup> These include the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites, the Royal Commission for Governorate of Al-Ula, the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.



The flagship project NEOM introduces a new model for urban sustainability powered by 100% renewable energy. A project that spans 26,500 km<sup>2</sup>, NEOM adopts environmental responsibility principles and promotes sustainable and regenerative development practices. It acts as a world-scale laboratory of future-proof urbanization. The project will develop the LINE, a city of a million residents with a length of 170 km that aims to preserve 95% of nature within NEOM, with zero cars, zero streets, zero carbon emissions, and powered by 100% renewable energy and green hydrogen.

Significant investments have concentrated in waste management, including reducing waste generation, promoting recycling, and improving waste collection and disposal methods. The government has promoted the sustainable management of waste and natural resources. For example, the government has built several waste-to-energy plants and has launched recycling initiatives to reduce the amount of waste generated in cities. Under the National Transformation Program, the National Center for Environmental Compliance is establishing a central air quality and emission monitoring unit, which includes about 240 stations that cover all regions and cities, and which is further advancing the Kingdom's analysis and forecasting capabilities in this area.

Saudi Arabia is improving the quality of life in cities by planning and development of public spaces and parks. The "Future Saudi Cities Program 2014-2022" – a joint initiative of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA) and UN-Habitat - is being implemented in 17 major cities. The program aims to evaluate the prosperity and well-being indicators for these cities and analyze the institutional mechanism and structure of urban planning while suggesting improvements to these structures through capacity building. The government has launched the "Green KSA" and "Green Riyadh" environmental initiatives and is investing in cities to enhance their competitiveness and potential. These investments include the creation of green spaces, pedestrian walkways, and recreational areas, with the aim of promoting healthy and active lifestyles, as well as improving the overall livability of cities. The Saudi cities Al-Ahsa and Buraidah have joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).<sup>15</sup> The government has also invested in the development of smart cities, such as the King Abdullah Economic City and the Prince Mohammad Bin Salman smart city, which aim to provide sustainable and livable urban environments. The government has promoted various smart city technologies to improve urban living and enhance the quality of life. Some examples are provided in the figure below:

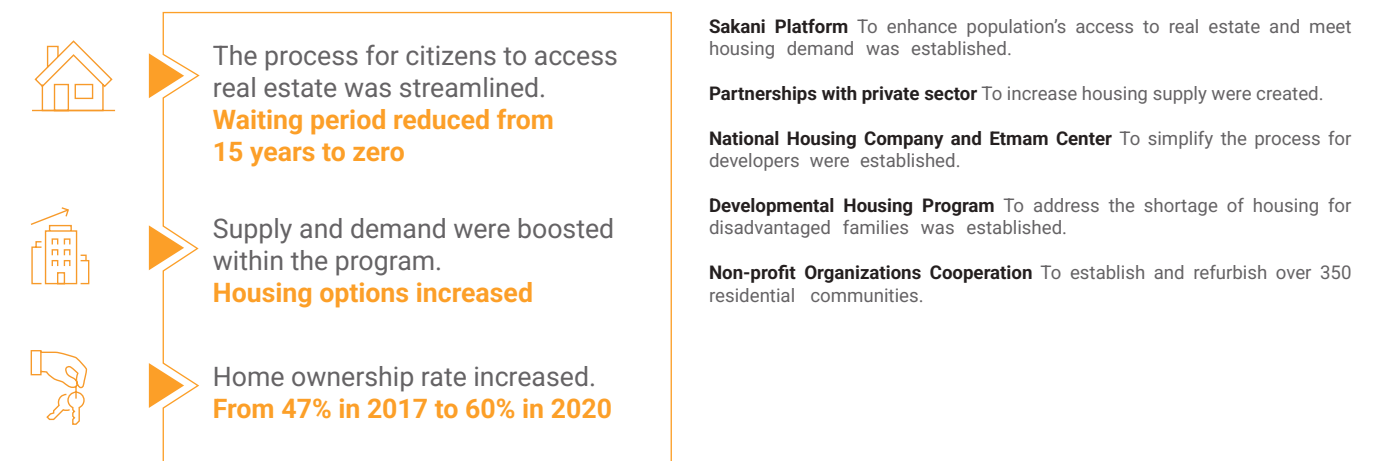


<sup>15</sup>More than 300 cities around the world are part of this network and work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

Furthermore, transparency in urban planning has improved significantly, with the public participating in urban planning projects. According to the 2019 figures from the Ministry of Municipal Rural Affairs and Housing (MOMRAH), the percentage of municipalities with a structured, participatory framework that engages the general public directly in urban planning and management is 99.6%. This shows the potential of engaging all population segments of Saudi Arabia in the planning process. As a means to ensure freedom of participation and to provide an opportunity for individuals to weigh in on important issues, the government has created the "Your Voice Is Heard" service. The portal, established by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, enabled the general public, including experts, stakeholder groups, and those with a direct interest in a topic, to communicate with the government by sharing their ideas through a variety of social media platforms that are integrated into their electronic portal.<sup>16</sup>

To accommodate its growing population, Saudi Arabia has made housing a long-term priority of the Kingdom. As outlined in the previous sections of this report, the government has introduced financing modalities for building and purchasing homes. Vision 2030 includes the Housing Program 2030 which aims to increase Saudi home ownership to 70% by the end of 2030 and to provide 75,000 developmental housing units (2021 to 2030). The program targets the most vulnerable and is implemented with the Saudi Housing NGOs. As of April 2022, there were 10.3 million beneficiaries/ followers, while the total amount that the program has paid to the beneficiaries since its inception is more than SAR 116 billion.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the government has introduced green building standards to encourage the construction of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly buildings and the adoption of renewable energy solutions, such as solar panels.

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The government has also invested in strengthening the resilience of communities, particularly in the face of natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. For example, the government has established early warning systems and emergency response mechanisms to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes. The government has also taken steps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, by promoting energy-efficient buildings, and increasing the use of renewable energy. The management of water resources has improved through the construction of desalination plants, ensuring a sustainable supply of water for Saudi communities. The government also established the Regional Center for Early Warning of Dust Storms which provides accessibility to forecasts and other relevant information. The initiative is part of the establishment of two other regional centers: the Regional Center for Climate Change and the Regional Program for Cloud Rainfall.

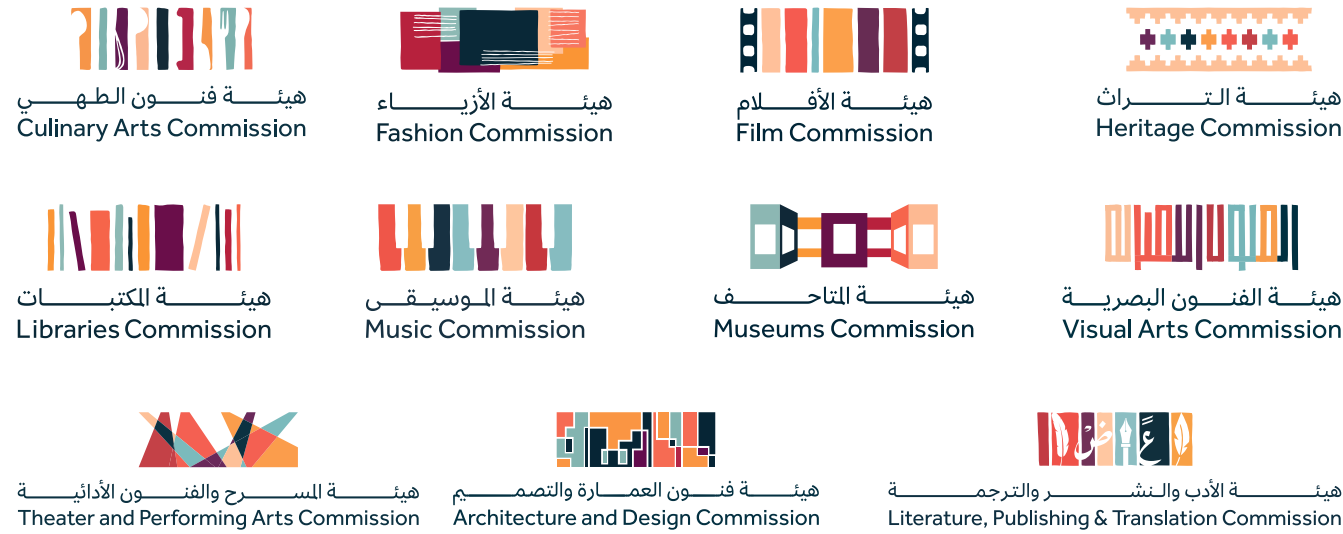
<sup>16</sup>Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, 2022.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

## ► Making Culture a Way of Life

The cultural sector in the Kingdom contributes to economic growth, strengthening the Kingdom's international status and preserving its identity. It supports: visual, theatrical, musical, architectural and literary arts.

A stand-alone Ministry for Culture was established in June 2018 to promote the Kingdom's culture and heritage. In 2020, 11 independent cultural bodies were established:

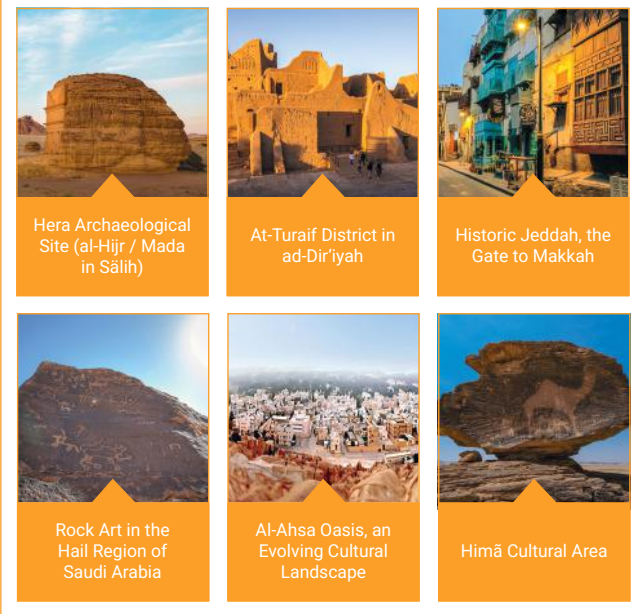


The government has adopted several policies to protect cultural heritage sites, which are considered an important part of the country's history and identity. The government has enacted laws to protect heritage sites and regulate construction and development activities in and around these sites and has funded archaeological excavations and restoration projects to preserve heritage sites and maintain their historical significance.

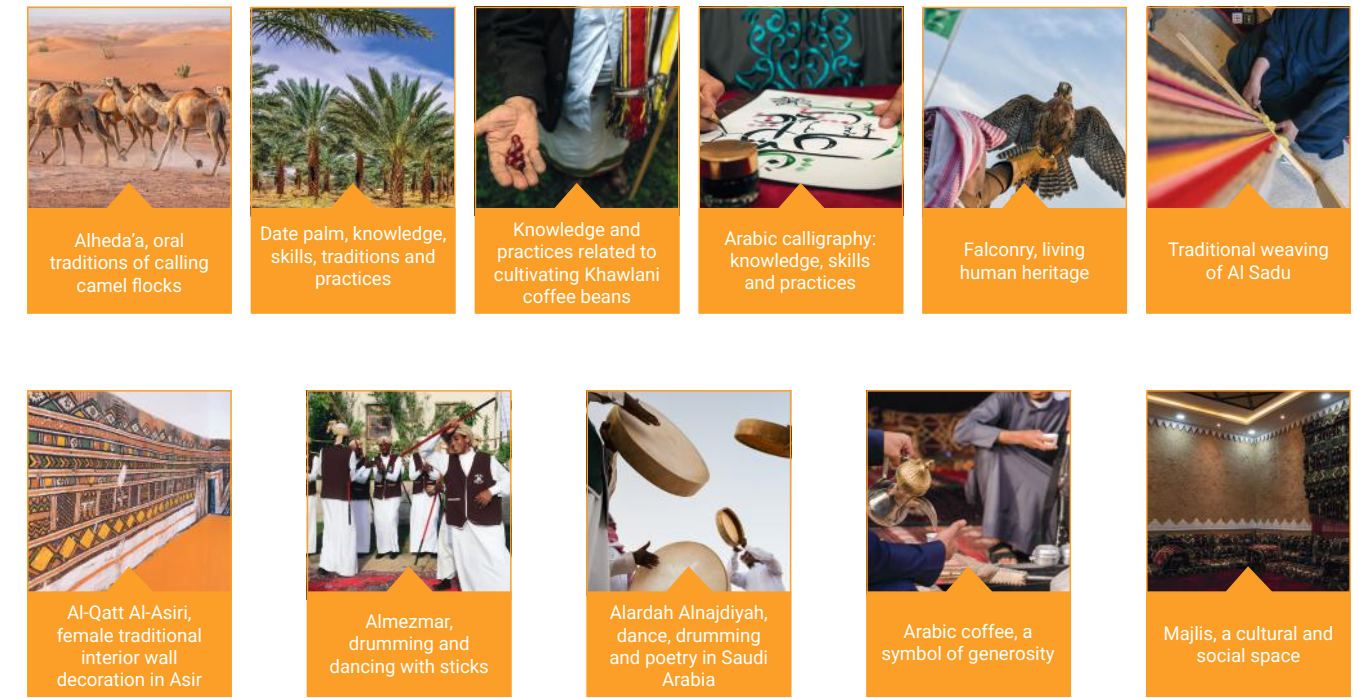
The "National Heritage and Culture Program" is designed to preserve the country's cultural and historical heritage, including traditional architecture, handicrafts, and cultural landmarks. The "Historic Preservation Law" provides legal protection for historic sites and buildings, ensuring that they are preserved and protected for future generations. The Department of Culture in the Ministry of Culture, sponsors cultural programs, including literary and drama clubs, folklore classes, library events, arts and crafts, and science projects. Six Saudi sites are listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as part of the world's historical heritage, and eleven elements are included on the list of intangible cultural heritage (2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage).

### THE KINGDOM'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

The six sites listed in the World Heritage List (1972 World Heritage Convention) include:



The eleven elements inscribed on the lists of intangible cultural heritage (2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage) include:



The government has also invested in the development of sustainable tourism programs to promote heritage sites as tourist destinations while ensuring their protection. The National Tourism Strategy seeks to achieve the goals related to sustainable tourism development, within the framework stipulated by Vision 2030. The roles of the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Development Fund, and the Saudi Tourism Authority are integrated to implement the national tourism strategy and achieve the sector's ambitions and goals.

### Higher Number of National Heritage Sites open to visitors

- The Kingdom's regions are increasing the number of heritage sites open to visitors.  
**From 241 sites in 2017 to 354 in 2020**
- There was an increase in the number of urban heritage sites registered in the National Cultural Heritage Register.  
**From only 400 in 2016 to 1,000 in 2020**
- The number of intangible cultural heritage elements registered with UNESCO has increased.  
**From 3 before Vision 2030, there are 8 registered now**
- Heritage sites were open through the development of world-class operations, performance and visitor experiences.  
**Sites open in AlUla, Al-Hijr, Dedan, and Jabal Ikma**
- Heritage buildings were revitalized in the old market area of the Incense (Bakhoor) Trade Route through the renovation of mud houses and community participation.  
**The Old Town Market now contains 31 shops**



# SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

## The Quality of Life Program

### IN-DEPTH CASE

#### SUMMARY

Launched in 2018 the Program focuses on the improvement quality of life by providing necessary environment and enhancing participation and inclusion of citizens and expatriates in cultural, sports and entertainment activities.

#### IMPACT

Selected achievements include

##### Entertainment:

- Launched the entertainment events schedule
- Launched numerous skills training programs
- Facilitated private sector investment through contracts with Saudi banks
- Opened and operating over 1,000 educational and entertainment neighborhood clubs

##### Heritage, culture and arts:

- Organized events, exhibitions, and cultural activities
- Enhanced international cultural participation
- Established regional museums
- Qualified numerous archeological sites to accommodate visitors in all regions including in Aljof, Jubba, Alshuwaimes in Hail, Jazan, Taimaa, and sites in Al-Ahsa and Riyadh
- Established arts academies
- Registered Saudi sites at UNESCO as world heritage sites
- Facilitated investment in cultural sector

##### Sports:

- Hosted distinguished international sports events
- Organized local and community sport event, championship, and competitions
- Launched training and development programs for sports Talents and collaborated with elite specialized sports institutes

##### Tourism:

- Launched the "Visit Saudi" marketing campaign
- Launched a package for products services, and campaigns to promote tourism in the kingdom
- Launched the tourist visa on a dedicated platform, with full integration and connectivity with related agencies
- Developed human capital in the tourism sector by nationalizing leadership and specialized positions in the tourist accommodation sector, launched a scholarship program in tourism
- Empowered the private sector to invest in tourism sector to invest in the tourism sector by facilitating procedures and supporting financing. The outcome has been the issuance of more than a hundred licenses around the kingdom and supporting lending to over 67 projects worth over SR 200 million.

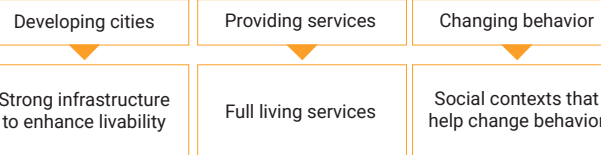
##### Urban Design:

- Launched the municipal investments "Furas"
- Limited visual pollution that affects total Urban Development
- Issued updated regulations for the use of municipal real estate and allowing naming and sponsorship rights by investors
- Improved project management developed services by obliging contractors to insure buildings against hidden defects, launched a classification program for city service providers and launched a portal to monitor over 3,000 services centers.
- Expedited access to city services through communication technology
- Developed workers housing regulations

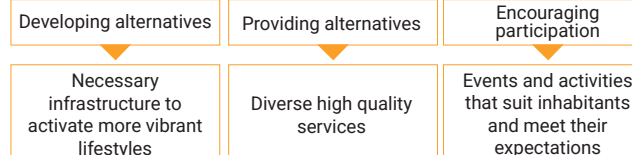
#### NEXT STEPS

Providing high quality of life to the inhabitants and visitors of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and seeking to have **three Saudi cities** listed in the top **100 cities in the world**

##### Developing the standard of living in Saudi cities



##### Developing and enriching lifestyle



Developing necessary laws and regulations

Financial sustainability (private sector enablement's/public investment)

Effective communication

Saudi Arabia has launched several additional initiatives aimed at improving the Kingdom's cultural environment.

#### ADDITIONAL CULTURAL INITIATIVES

##### King Salman International Complex for the Arabic Language

The complex promotes Arab cultural identity by supporting research in, and new applications of, the Arabic language. Established in September 2020, it aims to become a global point reference by publishing and protecting the Arabic language, supporting its research and contributing to the modern linguistic applications of the language.

##### National Cultural the awards Initiative

The Awards celebrate media and community leaders and the cultural achievements of individuals, groups and institutions in various cultural sectors. It is the largest initiative of its kind aimed at promoting cultural content and production, in addition to providing material and moral support to winners.

##### Maraya (Mirrors) Concert Hall

The building is cubic with a width of 100m and height of 25m, with a mixed-use area of over 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In March 2020, the building entered the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest mirror-covered building in the world.

##### Film Infrastructure

Designed to enhance and support local talent discovery, the initiative has produced 45 Saudi films gaining the Kingdom the second place in the Middle East in terms of ticket sales. The new Film Talent Development Program provides training courses and workshops in a variety of film-making disciplines in cooperation with the world's top universities and scientific institutions.

##### Jeddah Season

Jeddah Season is an annual cultural event that showcases the city's vibrant arts and cultural scene through a series of concerts, festivals, and exhibitions.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Significant progress has been made in promoting sustainable development practices in Saudi cities, but there are opportunities for further improvement and growth. The government is committed to further investing efforts and resources in these areas, which includes improving participatory planning, enhancing the regulatory framework, and boosting technical capabilities among local and central government officials. The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRAH) notes that 99.6% of municipalities already have a structured participatory framework for urban planning, providing a strong foundation for increased public involvement. Recent legislative and policy changes showcase a commitment to creating inclusive, sustainable urban environments, and ongoing refinement will continue to address any remaining barriers. Furthermore, investing in the technical expertise of local government and ministry officials will empower them to plan, design, and implement development projects more effectively.

The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Enhance the implementation of existing participatory frameworks to ensure increased public involvement in urban planning and management processes.
- Invest in capacity-building programs to equip local government and ministry officials with the necessary technical skills to plan, design, and implement development projects more effectively.
- Continuously review legislation and policies to better promote inclusive, sustainable urban environments.
- Foster collaboration between government agencies, the private sector, and local communities to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to sustainable urban development.



# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION







# 1. General Situation

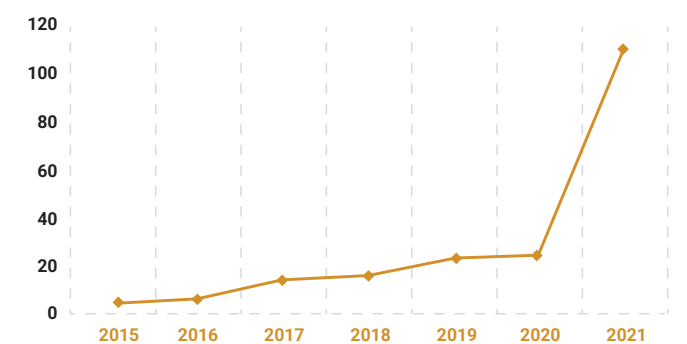
Saudi Arabia has promoted sustainable consumption and production practices, particularly in the areas of waste management and resource efficiency. The government has made significant progress in promoting the use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, and has implemented several initiatives to improve energy efficiency in buildings and industries.

SDG data from GASTAT shows that in 2020, Saudi Arabia generated 76,000 tons of hazardous waste, all of which was treated. The country is effectively managing its hazardous waste, which is crucial for ensuring environmental sustainability and protecting human health. The data also shows that the number of companies publishing sustainability reports in Saudi Arabia has consistently increased from 2015 to 2021, reflecting a growing emphasis on sustainable development and corporate responsibility. The substantial growth between 2020 and 2021 highlights the rising importance of sustainability reporting and demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability in the corporate sector.

The data also shows that 75% of the national educational policy addresses sustainable development. Whereas 100% of student assessments incorporate sustainable development-related knowledge and skills. This indicates a strong commitment to integrating sustainable development principles into the education system, ensuring that students are exposed to these concepts and learn about their importance in creating a sustainable future. It also indicates that the education system in Saudi Arabia is not only teaching sustainable development principles but also assessing students' understanding and application of these concepts.

Saudi Arabia has taken important steps to improve its sustainability and waste management practices. The government has established several waste-to-energy plants, and has launched recycling initiatives aimed at reducing the amount of waste generated in cities. The municipalities are making huge efforts to collect and reduce solid waste within cities. Companies such as SABIC, Aramco, Ma'aden, and the National Water Company are implementing sustainability practices. SABIC, for instance, has taken a leading role in the use of recycled plastic, helping to reduce waste and conserve resources. Companies develop corporate sustainability plans, including initiatives to reduce waste, increase efficiency and promote sustainability. The government has also promoted sustainable tourism, by investing in eco-tourism initiatives, such as protected areas and national parks, and by promoting sustainable practices among tourism businesses. The country is also working to improve the efficiency of its supply chains, by promoting sustainable sourcing practices, reducing waste, and increasing the use of environmentally friendly products and services. The government is encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices, and is providing support and incentives to help companies transition to more sustainable business models.

Number of companies publishing sustainability reports





## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia has established several institutions and policies to promote responsible consumption and production. The following are some key institutions and initiatives:

### INCREASING PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Reduction in the agricultural sector's consumption of non-renewable groundwater from 17 billion m<sup>3</sup> in 2016 to 9 billion m<sup>3</sup> in 2020.

The **National Center for Waste Management (MWAN)** has issued regulations, endorsed by the Council of Ministers, that provide the legal framework for sustainable and environmentally responsible waste management in the Kingdom. Another important initiative is the **Comprehensive Strategy for Waste Management**, developed by the Royal Commission for Riyadh Development, which addresses waste management in the city of Riyadh, and provides a roadmap for improving waste management practices.

### Integrated Strategy for Waste Management in Riyadh City

Economic growth in Riyadh has led to widespread development including demolition, construction, and excavation. This has led to an increase in the amount of waste material being produced. To respond to this, a comprehensive strategy for waste management in Riyadh was developed by the Higher Committee for Environmental Protection. The strategy will result in the development of an integrated system for the management and recycling of construction and demolition waste among other forms of waste. This initiative is a collaboration between Riyadh Municipality, the National Waste Management Center and the Saudi Investment Recycling Company. The aim is to recycle 47% of their construction and demolition waste and 81% of annually produced municipal solid waste by 2035. To facilitate this, new technologies will be introduced to allow waste to be reused in different forms including fertilizers, papers, plastics, metals and so on. In 2019, the mayor of Riyadh launched an experiment in several neighborhoods to replace single bins in households with double bins to separate inorganic and organic materials and to cut down on waste that directly goes to the landfill. Currently, there is only one landfill operating in the city, where efforts are now underway to improve efficiency by sorting debris and disposing of it systematically.

The **National Center for Waste Management (MWAN)** was established to regulate and oversee waste management activities while encouraging investment in the sector and granting licenses and permits to service providers, such as those for recycling. With the goal of recycling 35% of all waste types by 2035, the center also seeks to manage non-recyclable waste through the production of alternative fuels or energy generation. The government has also adopted a waste management strategy to help reduce waste.

The **Saudi Investment Recycling Company** was established to manage the local waste management sector by investing in projects that increase conversion rates and recycling operations. By forming partnerships with private sector companies specializing in this field, SIRC aims to elevate the Kingdom's environmental standards to the highest international levels, covering all types of recyclable materials throughout the Kingdom and the entire value chain. The company's primary objective is to foster a circular economy by maximizing the value of waste materials while minimizing the environmental impact associated with waste generation and disposal, through activities such as waste collection, sorting, processing, and recycling, as well as the development of waste-to-energy projects.

### Establishment of the Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC)



It has opened the first construction and demolition waste treatment plant in Riyadh with a designed capacity between 1,200 and 1,800 tons per hour.



SIRC was established to develop the recycling sector in the Kingdom.

**SABIC** has launched the TRUCIRCLE™ portfolio which offers its customers circular solutions that span design for recyclability, mechanically recycled products, certified circular products from feedstock recycling of used plastics, and certified renewable products from bio-based feedstock. SABIC targets one million metric tons of TRUCIRCLE™ solutions by 2030, reaffirming its commitment to the circular carbon economy.

**Sadara**, a Saudi chemical company, has implemented a reuse program to assess the feasibility of repurposing waste materials within its facility, such as wooden pallets, metal drums, and jumbo bags, in conjunction with dedicated recycling programs for wastewater, oily water, hydrocarbon liquids, solid waste, paper, plastic, and electronic waste. The primary goal of these strategies is to reduce and eliminate waste, ultimately minimizing its environmental impact and conserving energy. In 2022, approximately 50% of the total waste generated by Sadara was recycled, yielding impressive recycling records. As a result, Sadara saved around SAR 22 million in disposal costs and generated over SAR 930,000 in revenue from recycling activities. In addition, the company exceeded its target of a 2.5% reduction in material effectiveness intensity, showcasing its commitment to sustainable waste management.

Furthermore, the Saudi government has adopted policies and regulations aimed at reducing the use of hazardous chemicals and promoting the use of environmentally friendly products. For instance, the government has established a **program for the assessment and management of chemicals**, with the goal of reducing their impact on human health and the environment. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has ratified several international multilateral environmental agreements related to hazardous substances, including **the Basel Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, and the Minamata Convention**.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The main challenges in food loss and waste management in the Kingdom involve the high volume of food loss and waste, inadequate food recycling practices, and the need for increased adoption of modern technologies to mitigate waste. Addressing these challenges is essential for enhancing food sustainability and reducing the environmental impact. The emphasis needs to be on separating waste at the source, recycling food waste, and repurposing building material waste. It will also be important to promote sustainable consumption and production practices, particularly in the industrial and agricultural sectors. Lastly, there should be increased attention on integrating climate change and ecosystem protection in public policies, plans, and programs.

The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Educate the public and businesses about food loss and waste reduction, promoting responsible consumption habits and waste management practices.
- Encourage the use of innovative waste reduction technologies in various sectors, such as food production, distribution, and retail, to minimize food loss and waste.
- Further develop and improve facilities for food waste and building materials recycling, enabling more efficient waste processing and repurposing.
- Strengthen the circular economy framework and expand it to all regions and sectors, focusing on holistic circular solutions to promote resource efficiency and reduce waste.
- Incentivize the adoption of sustainable production and consumption practices, particularly in the agricultural and industrial sectors, to reduce the environmental impact.
- Ensure that climate change mitigation and ecosystem protection measures are further incorporated into public policies, plans, and programs across all levels of the government.



# SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: THE SAUDI INVESTMENT RECYCLING COMPANY (SIRC)

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

The Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia. It was founded to develop, own, operate, and finance various activities across all waste types to establish recycling capacities in the Kingdom and build a circular economy for a sustainable future.

### IMPACT

**16 million tons** of construction and demolition materials recycled in 2022, achieving new record

**600,000 tons** of industrial waste recycled and treated in 2022



SIRC signed a MOU with SABIC to set up first chemical recycling plant converting mixed plastic waste into recycled feedstock

### NEXT STEPS

SIRC is to reduce waste landfill from 100% in 2021 to effectively 0% by 2035

SAR 120 billion will be invested in Saudi Arabia's circular economy between now and 2035

Aim to recycle 400,000 tons of biowaste annually

SIRC aims to inject investments estimated at SAR 4 billion over 15 years to achieve a 94% exclusion rate of landfills and achieve environmental, economic, and social sustainability with the participation of the private sector.

Through its achievements, SIRC will help meet and exceed the objectives of the Vision 2030 and support the success of various initiatives identified by the revised Waste Management National Regulatory Framework.

# 13 CLIMATE ACTION

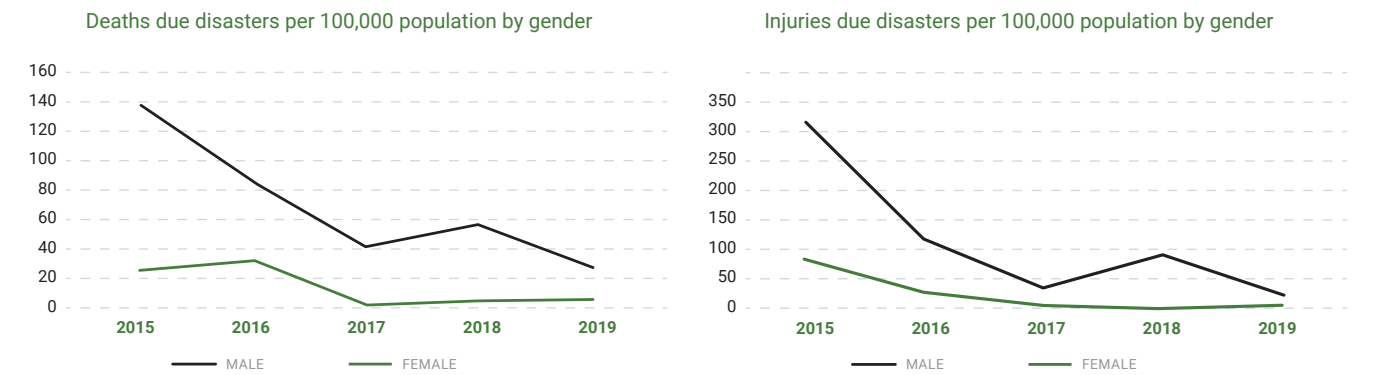




# 1. General Situation

As a leading global energy producer, Saudi Arabia is committed to advancing the global fight against climate change. Since the launch of Vision 2030, tremendous progress has been made in addressing Saudi Arabia's unique environmental challenges. Saudi Arabia is spearheading far-reaching, tailored action and is proud to play a key role in leading multilateral institutions for a more sustainable global future. The Kingdom plays a major role in multilateral institutions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

Saudi Arabia's data for SDG indicator 13.1.1 (below) shows a general decrease in the number of deaths and injuries due to disasters between 2015 and 2019. The data from GASTAT also shows that the number of male injuries and fatalities was consistently higher than the number of female injuries across all years.



# 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia has taken major steps to address climate change and reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Saudi Arabia's flagship climate change initiative is the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI). Launched in 2021, SGI unites environmental protection, energy transition and sustainability programs with the overarching aims of offsetting and reducing emissions, increasing the Kingdom's use of clean energy and addressing climate change. The ambition of SGI is to catalyze and implement a sustainable long-term climate action plan for the Kingdom. With ambitious plans, three key targets and whole-of-society action, SGI is a leap forward within Saudi Arabia's ambition to become a global leader in forging a greener future. The figure below illustrates SGI's vision.

SGI is steering the implementation of a sustainable long-term climate action plan. Ambitious initiatives are being implemented across Saudi Arabia to combat the impacts of climate change and create a cleaner, greener future for all. These include implementing comprehensive energy efficiency programs, making significant investments in clean hydrogen and renewable energy sources, and developing cutting-edge carbon capture technology.

## Saudi Green Initiative Vision

<p><b>Circular Carbon Economy</b></p> <p>The Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) framework is an integrated, inclusive and pragmatic approach to managing emissions. To date, Saudi has implemented more than 30 CCE initiatives across the energy system, enabling climate action while bolstering economic growth.</p>	<p><b>Investment in the Green Transition</b></p> <p>Saudi Arabia believes it is possible to achieve a responsible transition to net zero, without compromising on economic development. Through an inclusive approach, the Kingdom will generate investment, jobs and opportunities to benefit millions of people.</p>
<p><b>Global Collaboration</b></p> <p>Knowledge-sharing and international cooperation is essential in the race against climate change. Saudi Arabia is actively scaling up cross-border efforts to help create a more sustainable future.</p>	<p><b>Whole-of-Society Action</b></p> <p>Energy transition, land protection and afforestation are important components of climate action. Shared vision and determination are essential for success. The Saudi Green Initiative is a whole-of-society ambition that is activating public and private sectors and enabling citizens to achieve ambitious national targets.</p>



SGI takes a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to reach its emissions reduction goals. Key elements of this approach are shown in the figure below.

## To deliver the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's sustainability goals, SGI strives to:

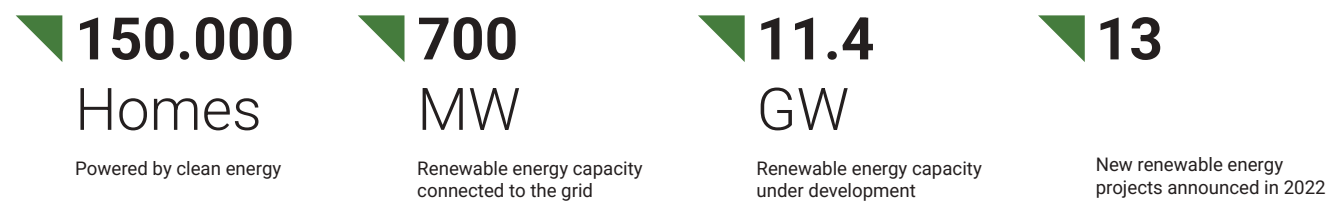
Oversee and unite all of Saudi Arabia's work to combat climate change under one umbrella, with clearly defined goals.	Combine the efforts of the government and private sector, identifying and supporting opportunities for collaboration and innovation.	Grow the green economy the first wave of more than 60 initiatives announced under SGI in 2021 represented an investment of over SAR 700 billion.	Accelerate the green transition and be a global leader in the implementation of the Circular Carbon Economy approach.	Improve quality of life and protect the environment for the benefit of future generations in Saudi Arabia.
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Three overarching targets guide SGI's work: emission reduction, afforestation, and land and sea protection. Since the launch of SGI in 2021, 77 initiatives have been activated, with further progress to be achieved in year two and beyond. The first wave of more than 60 initiatives announced in 2021 represented over SAR 700 billion in investments, contributing to the growth of the green economy. In 2022, 17 new environment-focused initiatives were launched. More initiatives will be launched in the coming years, scaling up Saudi Arabia's ambition to create a green future.

SGI's climate-related target is to reduce Saudi Arabia's carbon emissions by 278 mtpa of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030 this number is about twice the goal of 130 million tons presented in Saudi Arabia's previous Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) report. The Kingdom has committed to having 50% of its power generated from renewable sources by 2030, with the year 2019 designated as the base year. Beyond a domestic energy mix transformation, SGI is steering a range of ambitious initiatives to reduce emissions. These include investing in new energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and developing a carbon capture and storage program. The figure below shows the results Saudi Arabia has already achieved in the area of climate change action and emissions reductions.

## Reducing emissions is essential in the fight against climate change

EFFORTS ACROSS THE KINGDOM ARE REGESTRING A POSITIVE IMPACT.



As part of SGI, various entities and organizations across Saudi Arabia are helping to scale up national climate action and create new initiatives. SGI's efforts to engage stakeholders across the private and public sectors is crucial to meet climate goals. These stakeholders are carefully selected to ensure that their goals and ambitions align with the overall cause that SGI is championing. Two focused committees, the Energy and Climate Change Committee and the Environment Committee, oversee the implementation of initiatives against the SGI targets. They also rally the public and private sector ecosystems to ensure coordination and that all efforts adhere to the highest international standards.

## Key Climate Change Stakeholders



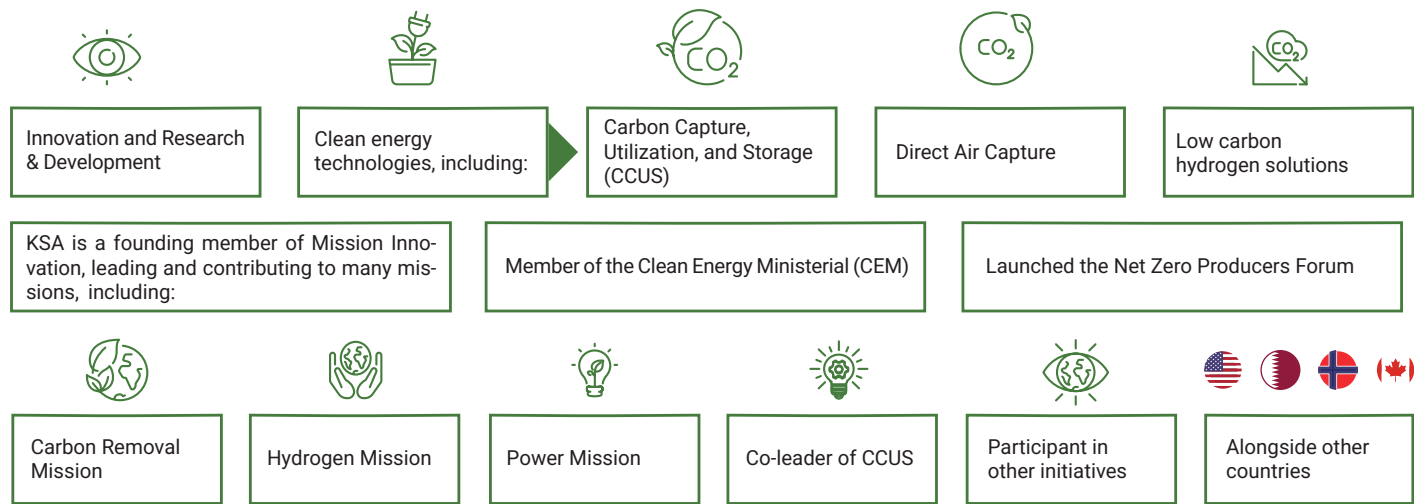
Under the SGI framework, the Kingdom is developing and implementing holistic and harmonized programs, policies, initiatives, and collaboration platforms to address climate change challenges at the national, regional and global scale. They include the Circular Carbon Economy National Program, the National Renewable Energy Program, and the Saudi Energy Efficiency Program. The Kingdom is also a member and an active participant of major international initiatives such as Global Methane Initiative, Mission Innovation, Clean Energy Ministerial, and Net-Zero Producers Forum. Saudi Arabia has also been actively participating in international climate change negotiations, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The country has ratified the Paris Agreement and has committed to enhancing its domestic climate action in line with the agreement's goals.

Saudi Arabia has set a target of reducing, avoiding and removing emissions in the amount of 278 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year by 2030 and has pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2060 through the circular carbon economy approach.<sup>18</sup> The government is investing in technologies for reducing emissions, including carbon capture and storage technologies, as well as energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. The Kingdom has also joined the Global Methane Pledge to contribute to cutting global methane emissions by 30% by 2030.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This program aims to achieve global and national climate protection, socioeconomic impact, and global leadership. The framework operates by relying on 4 Rs, reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and GHG production, reuse of CO<sub>2</sub> and GHG without chemical alteration, recycling of CO<sub>2</sub> and GHG through chemical alteration and removal of CO<sub>2</sub> and GHG that are already emitted through technologies such as direct air capture or nature-based solutions such as afforestation.

<sup>19</sup> The Global Methane Initiative is an international collaborative effort to reduce methane gas emissions and advance methane recovery and use as a clean energy source.

## Saudi Arabia's Role in International Climate Change Initiative



Saudi Arabia plays a key role in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where it promotes issues and efforts related to sustainable development and environmental protection

Voluntary Carbon Market initiative (VCM): The Public Investment Fund (PIF) recently conducted the largest-ever carbon credit sale, auctioning 1.4 million tons of carbon credits during the 6th Edition of the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh. This initiative aligns with PIF's efforts to support Saudi Arabia's green agenda, including

### Launching the circular carbon economy concept

During the 2020 Saudi G20 Presidency, the Kingdom initiated the concept of a circular carbon economy, which the G20 leaders adopted as an integrated and comprehensive framework to address the challenges of greenhouse gas emissions and manage all available technologies. This approach is an economically sustainable way of managing emissions using the 4R framework Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Remove.

completing a \$3 billion inaugural green bond and leading renewable projects to develop 70% of the nation's renewable energy capacity in line with Vision 2030. Fifteen Saudi and regional entities, including Aramco, Olayan Financing Company, and Ma'aden, participated in the auction, purchasing high-quality, CORSIA-compliant and Verra-registered carbon credits. The auction supports businesses in various industries as they contribute to the global transition to net-zero, aiming for meaningful emission reductions.

Other climate change mitigation initiatives include the **National Transport & Logistics Strategy**, which focuses on climate-adaptive transportation strategies, plans, and policies; the **National Environmental Strategy**, which integrates climate adaptation into all national strategies and aims to raise environmental compliance and reduce pollution; the establishment of one of the world's largest **Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** hubs in Jubail City, targeting a capacity of 44 million tons of carbon by 2035, with a joint development agreement between Saudi Aramco, SLB, and Linde aiming to store up to 9 million tons of carbon per year by 2027; the **Green Bond and Financing Framework**, which supports climate action projects; the **Net Zero Producers Forum**, a collaborative platform for oil and gas-producing countries to develop net-zero strategies; and **Mission Innovation**, a global initiative to accelerate public and private clean energy innovation.

The Kingdom is an active participant in major international initiatives, engaging in global cooperation to advance climate solutions. Including efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change through multiple initiatives including the Middle East Green Initiative (see more details under SD G17).

Having recognized that international collaboration is an essential part of achieving climate goals, Saudi Arabia is focused on innovation and R&D to advance clean energy technologies, including those necessary for net-zero ambitions, such as carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), direct air capture, and clean hydrogen solutions. As a founding member of Mission Innovation, the nation leads and contributes to various missions, including the Carbon Removal, Hydrogen, and Power missions. Additionally, Saudi Arabia is a member of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), co-leading the CCUS initiative and participating in other efforts. Together with the United States, Qatar, Norway, and Canada, the Kingdom launched the net zero Producers Forum, aiming to develop pragmatic Net Zero strategies encompassing methane abatement, advancement of the circular carbon economy, and the development and deployment of clean energy technologies and CCUS.

## 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Key areas of attention under **SDG 13** include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing clean energy usage, and adapting to climate change. The Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) unites environmental protection, energy transition, and sustainability programs with targets for emissions reduction, afforestation, and land and sea protection. Efforts will concentrate on the implementation of the circular carbon economy approach across sectors. Investing in carbon capture and storage technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable energy initiatives will be crucial. The country will also focus on climate-adaptive transportation strategies, environmental compliance, and pollution reduction, while supporting climate action projects through green bonds and financing frameworks. Finally, participation in global initiatives like the Net Zero Producers Forum and Mission Innovation will further advance Saudi Arabia's climate change mitigation efforts.

### The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Expand renewable energy capacity on the basis of the SGI vision, which includes investments in solar, wind, and other renewable energy projects to achieve the target of generating 50% of power from renewable sources by 2030.
- Implement energy efficiency programs to enhance energy efficiency across all sectors, including industry, transportation, and residential, to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Develop carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies to advance and scale up CCS projects, such as the one in Jubail City, to capture and store significant amounts of carbon and reduce overall emissions.
- Develop direct air capture (DAC) technologies to advance and scale up emissions removals.
- Promote green financing by using instruments such as the green bonds and financing frameworks to fund sustainable and climate action projects
- Advance climate-adaptive transportation strategies by implementing sustainable transportation initiatives, such as promoting electric vehicles, enhancing public transportation, and encouraging eco-friendly urban planning.
- Enhance international collaboration by launching the Middle East Green Initiative and actively participate in global initiatives, such as the Net Zero Producers Forum and Mission Innovation, to share knowledge and cooperate with other countries in addressing climate change challenges.
- Support afforestation and land/sea protection by implementing large-scale afforestation initiatives and protect ecosystems by conserving land and marine areas to enhance biodiversity and support carbon sequestration.
- Engage stakeholders in a whole-of-society approach by fostering collaboration between the public and private sector to ensure coordinated efforts and unified goals in addressing climate change and achieving a greener future.

## SUMMARY

The need to reverse the effects of climate change can clearly be seen across the Middle East and Africa. The Saudi Green Initiative is a whole-of-society ambition, activating public and private sectors and enabling citizens to achieve national targets. Quality of life and economic opportunities are affected by several events, including:



In the words of HRH Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia: "We are ushering in a new green era for the region; in which we are collectively leading and reaping its fruits, in our joint belief that the effects of climate change are not limited to the natural environment only, but also to the economy and security of our nations".

### SGI unites:

- Environmental Protection
- Energy Transition
- Sustainability Programs

### With the aim to:

- Offset and reduce emissions
- Increase the use of clean energy
- Address climate change

## IMPACT

Introduction of the **Circular Carbon Economy (CCE)** framework as an integrated, inclusive, and pragmatic approach to managing emissions.

**>30 CCE** Initiatives across the energy system implemented

**60** Initiatives were launched to boost the transition toward a **green economy**, generate green investment, jobs, and opportunities.

**SAR 700 billion** Invested

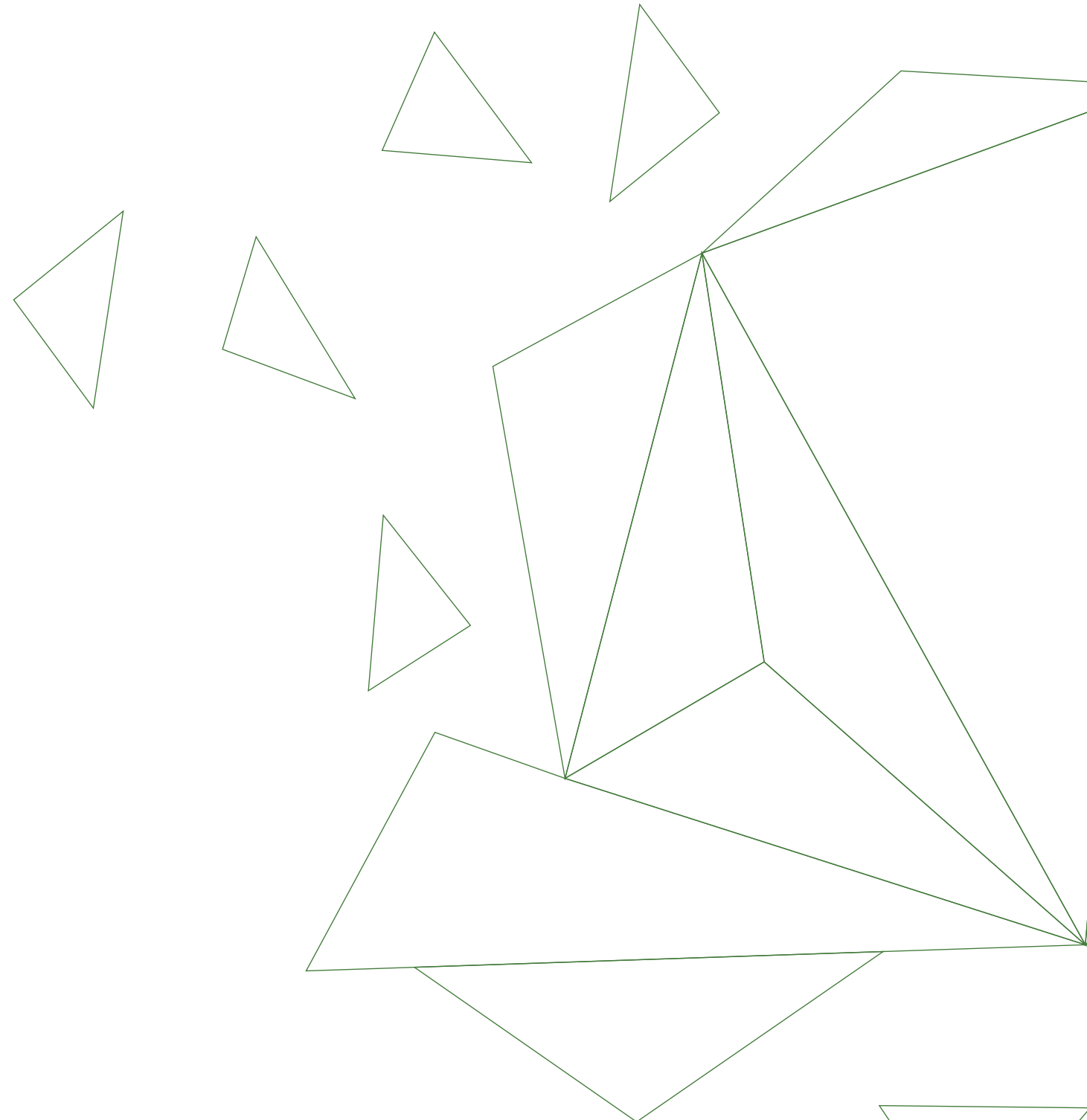
**Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) Forum** gathers climate leaders annually to discuss best practices, highlight innovation, evaluate progress, and drive forward substantive action in the race against climate change.

## NEXT STEPS

- Reducing Emissions**  
Net Zero is reached by 2060  
278 MPA NDC goal to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is reached in 2030
- Greening Saudi**  
Rehabilitate 40 million hectares
- Protecting Land and Sea**  
30% land and sea under protection to provide habitats for indigenous flora and Fauna

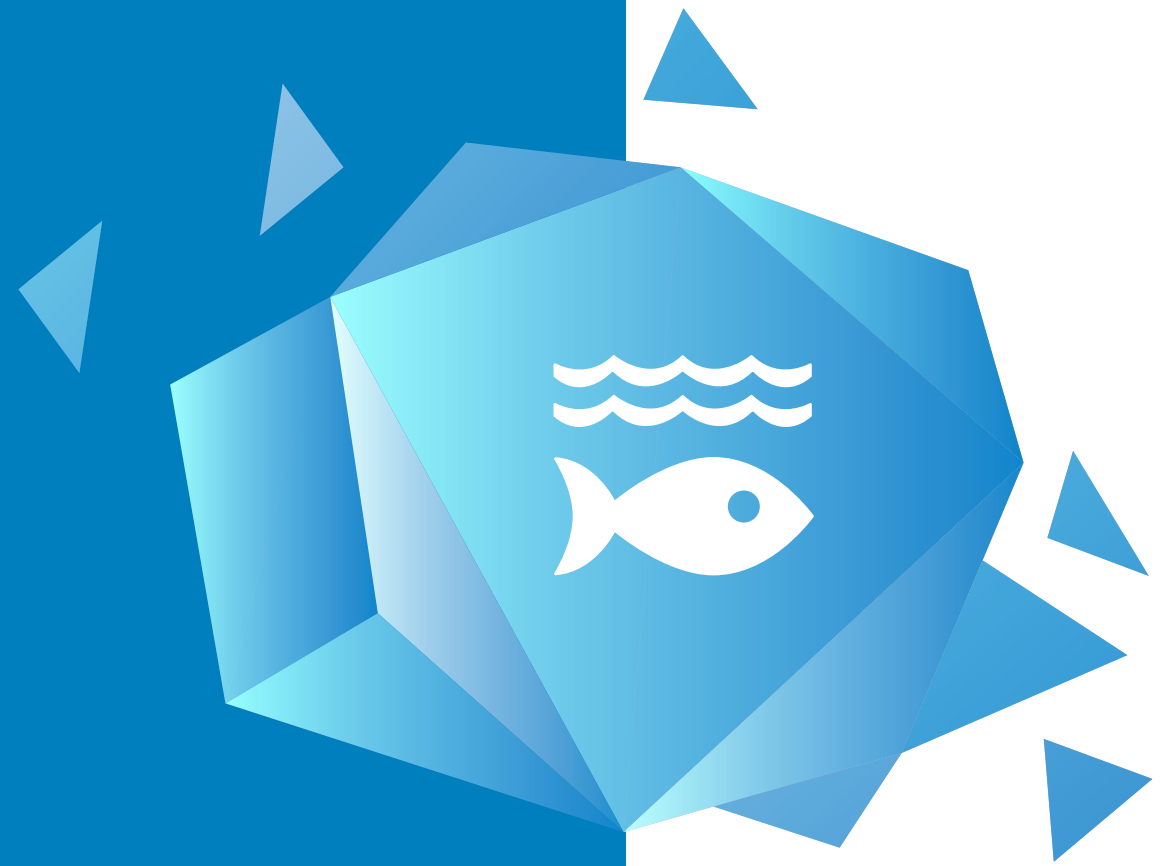
### In 2022:

<b>13</b> new renewable energy projects announced	<b>11.4GW</b> of renewable energy capacity is under development	<b>18 million</b> trees planted
<b>700MW</b> of renewable energy capacity connected to the grid	<b>1200+</b> animals rewilded land rehabilitated	<b>60,000</b> hectares of land rehabilitated
<b>150,000</b> homes were powered by clean energy	<b>USD 25</b> million invested to preserving the leopard	<b>250,000</b> shrubs cultivated in Al Ula's nurseries
		<b>66,000 km<sup>2</sup></b> of land remains under protection





# 14 LIFE BELOW WATER





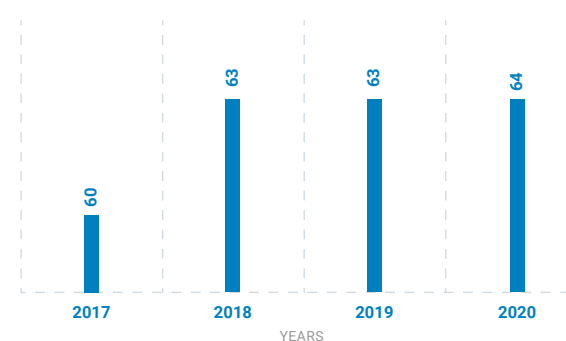


## 1. General Situation

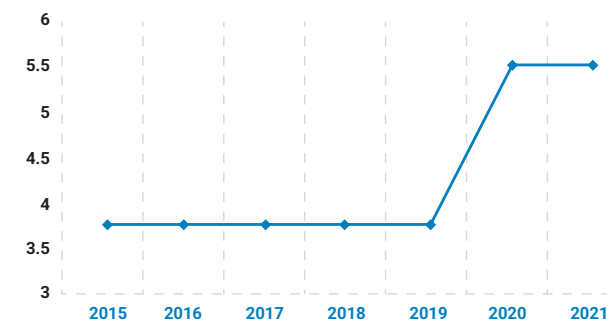
Saudi Arabia has made efforts to protect its marine and coastal ecosystems, including measures to address the impacts of pollution and overfishing. The government has prioritized the establishment of marine protected areas and has promoted sustainable fishing practices.

SDG data shows that Saudi Arabia has maintained fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels over the period of 2017-2020. This progress is crucial to the health of marine ecosystems, the sustainability of fishing industries, and the livelihoods of those who depend on them. In the period 2020-2021, the marine protected areas grew inside to 12,216 km<sup>2</sup>, with the percentage of marine protected areas rising to 5.5%, indicating progress in marine conservation efforts.

Fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels



Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas



## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia recognizes the importance of preserving its coastal and marine ecosystems and has taken steps to conserve its marine resources and reduce the impact of human activities on the marine environment. The **Saudi Green Initiative (SGI)**, Saudi Arabia's flagship climate change and environmental protection initiative includes measures for safeguarding seas and coastal areas. One of the three major SGI targets is to protect 30% of Saudi Arabia's land and sea by providing habitats for indigenous flora and fauna and ensuring that humanity continues to thrive in harmony with nature. Working in partnership with internationally leading biodiversity protection organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature, this ambitious target will ensure that abundant wildlife and pristine landscapes will continue to define the natural ecosystem in the Kingdom.

In terms of environmental regulation, Saudi Arabia recently revised its framework by introducing the **General Order for Environment** in July 2020, which serves as the country's national environmental law. This law is supported by a new set of executive bylaws covering a wide range of environmental elements, such as air quality, marine protection, and waste management. The framework established by the law and its bylaws is comprehensive and allows the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, along with its supporting environmental centers, to control pollution and preserve the environment while also meeting international obligations under multilateral environmental agreements.

The Kingdom is implementing coastal management strategies that are designed to reduce coastal erosion, increase the sinks for blue carbon, maintain related ecosystems, and address the threats that climate change poses for marine livelihoods. The government has promoted the planting of mangrove seedlings along its coasts. In addition, the Kingdom has strengthened the coral reef restoration program throughout the northwestern Arabian Gulf. Saudi Arabia's new-generation accelerator of coral reef restoration technologies aims to develop innovative technologies that enhance the thermal resilience of coral reefs and provide cost-effective options to scale up reef restoration by bringing together national stakeholders. Several studies were conducted to estimate the outtake of mangroves and other blue carbons for the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf.

Another key initiative undertaken by the government is the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). These MPAs are designed to conserve the country's coastal and marine ecosystems and to preserve the biodiversity of its marine resources. Additionally, the government has also been implementing regulations and policies to reduce the impacts of activities such as fishing and oil and gas production on the marine environment. The National Center for Environmental Compliance has bolstered the Kingdom's emergency preparedness by conducting 10 environmental disaster simulations over the last two years, training about 4000 individuals, and achieving the Middle East's peak oil spill response capacity of approximately 75,000 barrels.



The Kingdom's Red Sea coast is home to some of the most resilient coral reefs on the planet. A Red Sea Research Center has been established at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). Furthermore, in partnership with (KAUST), the Red Sea Development Company (RSDC) is laying the foundation for a sustainable tourism destination and leading the way in conserving and maintaining its pristine marine biodiversity. Furthermore, the Kingdom's marine and coastal protected areas were expanded when UNESCO designated the archipelago of Juzur Farasan as a biosphere reserve in 2021.

### Red Sea Project

This is a **regenerative tourism project** located in Tabouk on the west coast of Saudi Arabia in a 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> area in Tabuk province. The area includes 90 unspoiled offshore islands, 200km of coastline on the Red Sea, beaches, desert, mountains, and volcanoes. The project will be **powered by 100% renewable energy**, and less than 1% of the total project area of 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> is being developed. These efforts will preserve and enhance the Kingdom's pristine Red Sea coast, which is home to 175 different species of coral and 195 species of fish, as well as rare species.

Aquaculture has been practiced in the Kingdom for the last three decades as a sustainable method of supplying seafood in response to growing demand. This practice has overtaken traditional fishing methods in the previous decade, increasing exponentially since 2013. Aquaculture is expected to be the primary source of the Kingdom's seafood supply. The Saudi government has developed a National Fisheries Development Program which aims to attract \$4 billion in foreign and local investments for Saudi Arabia's fishing industry, with an initial focus on researching the seafood sector's potential. Additionally, the program seeks to enhance aquaculture facilities, increase production capacity, and foster 100 Saudi citizens as aquaculture leaders. Furthermore, the King Faisal University has established the Fish Resources Research Center. Also, the Faculty of Marine Science has been established at the King Abdulaziz University.

Saudi Arabia is encouraging eco-tourism initiatives that promote sustainable tourism practices and reduce the impacts of tourism on the marine environment. Moreover, the country has also been investing in research and development in the area of ocean conservation and sustainable use. For example, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) has undertaken research centering on sustainable ocean management. The government is actively engaging with other nations and organizations to exchange best practices and share knowledge and expertise.

The Kingdom has ascended to the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Saudi Arabia is in process of accession to the Port State Measures Agreement to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU). The Kingdom is also in the process of adopting new regulations regarding "Guidelines in Operations and Management of Fish Auction Halls". These new regulations shall apply to fish auction halls and all fish shops (wholesale or retail) located within public food market. This will cover pots-harvest activities which include handling, processing, storing and transporting fish and other fishery products being sold on the public market, intended for human consumption. Saudi Arabia is also working with international organizations to address shared challenges and achieve common goals in the field of marine conservation and sustainable ocean management. This includes participating in international initiatives and agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and collaborating with other nations on issues such as marine pollution and the sustainable use of ocean resources.

### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

Key areas of attention under **SDG 14** include the conservation and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, establishment and expansion of marine protected areas, and promotion of sustainable fishing practices. Additionally, there will be greater focus on sustainable aquaculture development, fostering eco-tourism initiatives, enhancing marine research and development, and actively engaging with international organizations and agreements to address shared challenges and achieve common goals in marine conservation and sustainable ocean management.

Another area of attention for Saudi Arabia is the development of fishery management plans and support for small-scale artisanal fishers. Emphasizing integrated coastal zone management and adopting an ecosystem-based approach present a valuable opportunity to develop coastal urban areas and infrastructure while simultaneously reducing land-based sources of pollution.

#### The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Continue expanding and effectively managing marine protected areas to ensure the conservation of marine biodiversity and habitats.
- Maintain research and development efforts in marine conservation and sustainable ocean management through collaborations with universities and research institutions.
- Strengthen eco-tourism initiatives that promote sustainable tourism practices and minimize the impacts of tourism on the marine environment.
- Invest further in sustainable aquaculture development, upgrading facilities, and increasing production capacity while minimizing environmental impacts.
- Strengthen the enforcement of environmental regulations and policies to control pollution and preserve marine ecosystems, including addressing land-based sources of pollution affecting coastal areas.
- Continue active engagement with international organizations, agreements, and initiatives to exchange best practices, share knowledge, and collaborate on global marine conservation and sustainable ocean management efforts.
- Strengthen fishery management plans, focusing on supporting small-scale artisanal fishers and promoting sustainable fishing practices.

## SDG 14 LIFE BELOW WATER: RED SEA GLOBAL

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

Red Sea Global (RSG) is one of the world's most visionary developers. Wholly owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia. The portfolio includes two world leading destinations: The Red sea and 'Amaala. Collectively, these responsible and regenerative tourism destinations will aim to enhance Saudi Arabia luxury tourism and sustainability offering going above and beyond to not only protect the natural environment. but to enhance it for future generation to come.

### IMPACT

#### The Red Sea

A development set to open on the west coast of Saudi Arabia. It is one of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism destinations forging a new relationship between luxury tourism & the natural world.

#### Amaala

A luxury tourism destination that will see guests on transformative personal wellness journeys against the backdrop of stunning landscapes and pristine ecosystems.

"Our masterplan for the destination has been developed to not only protect the environment but enrich it for future generations to enjoy."

"With Amaala, we are aiming to not only protect the environment in which we operate, but to actively regenerate it by honoring the setting in which we build and respecting the Red Sea's unique ecology."

The project underwent a series of environmental studies and the largest marine spatial planning simulation ever undertaken to assess the environmental impact of the development and operation of the destination's islands being preserved for conservation. The goal is to achieve a 30% net positive conservation benefit by 2040, achieved by enhancing key habitats that help biodiversity to flourish.

The project is leveraging experimental technological solutions to ensure a truly circular blue economy, from cradle-to-cradle. Smart technology, including & Internet of Thing tools are playing a crucial role in delivering climate commitments and provide a way to track performance against regrets. Sustainability is at the heart of the project with the entire destination set to be powered by 100% renewable energy.



# 15 LIFE ON LAND







# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has taken important steps to protect its biodiversity, including measures to restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, forests, and wildlife. In addition, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in addressing the challenges posed by desertification and land degradation, which are major threats to the country's terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity.

In 2021, the forest area in Saudi Arabia was 2 million hectares, which represented 1.1% of the total land area in the country. This relatively low percentage is not surprising given Saudi Arabia's predominantly arid climate and desert landscape.

Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in the protection of biodiversity. 15 sanctuaries managed by National Center for Wildlife have already been created to protect critically endangered species and promote biodiversity. Between 2017 and 2020, the proportion of land under protected natural areas increased from 4.56% to 16.21%. Additionally, Riyadh which is leading the way in sustainable development solutions, is currently in the process of planting more than 7.5 million trees across the city and increasing the amount of green space per capita from 1.7 to 28 m<sup>2</sup>.

## Increasing the percentage of green areas in the Kingdom

Implementation of sustainable initiatives and programs, including:

- Rehabilitation of more than **37 million m<sup>2</sup>** of parks and green spaces planting more than **14 million trees and flower beds**, and increasing public spaces and squares to **4.09 m<sup>2</sup> per capita**.
- Launch of advanced digital platforms and applications for use in the agriculture sector, increasing work efficiency and facilitating service demand, including the **"Zerai Platform"**, **"Agricultural Unions"** and **"Murshadik"**.

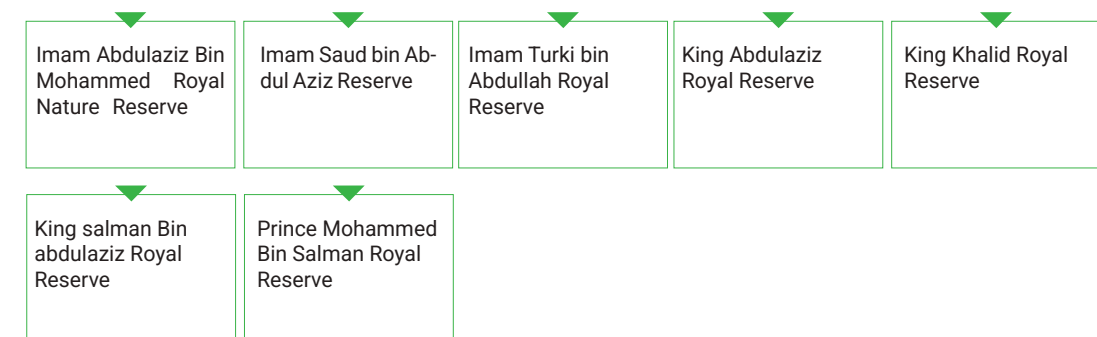
## Establishment of five specialized environmental centers

The centers, announced in March 2019, are transforming the Kingdom's approaches to their respective fields. The centers are:



## Establishment of seven royal natural reserves

Seven royal natural reserves covering 13.7% of the Kingdom were established, under the Council of Royal Reserves in 2018, to preserve plant and animal species



The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture reported turnout of about 2 million visitors to national parks in 2022, with the highest number of visitors reported in King Abdulaziz National Park.



The figure below shows the results Saudi Arabia has already achieved in the area of land rehabilitation.<sup>21</sup>

## TREE PLANTING PROVIDES NUMEROUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

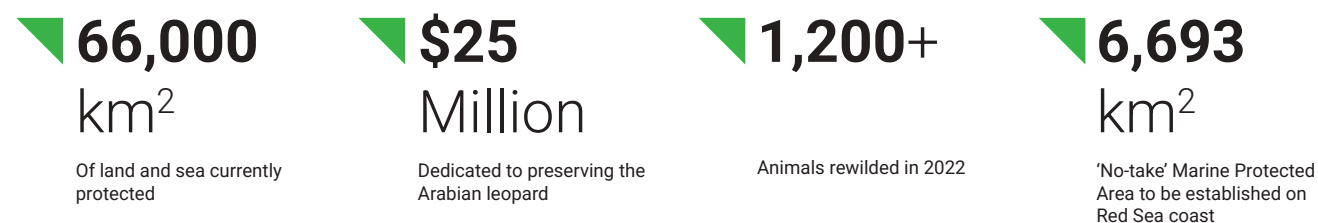
EFFORTS ACROSS THE KINGDOM ARE ALREADY HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT



Saudi Arabia's results in the area of biodiversity protection can be seen in the figure below.<sup>22</sup>

## PROTECTING LAND AND SEA WILL SUPPORT SAUDI'S DIVERSE FLORA AND FAUNA

EFFORTS ACROSS THE KINGDOM ARE ALREADY HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT



SDG data shows that the proportion of degraded land over the total land area stands at about 70%, which highlights the need for more efforts on implementing sustainable land management practices and restoring degraded land. Further, the extent of green cover in the country's mountain areas has not changed significantly during this period, emphasizing the importance of ongoing conservation and restoration efforts.

<sup>21</sup> Information retrieved from the website [www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa](http://www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa).

<sup>22</sup> Information retrieved from the website [www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa](http://www.greeninitiatives.gov.sa).

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

As noted under [SDG 13](#) and [SDG 14](#), the **Saudi Green Initiative (SGI)**, Saudi Arabia's flagship climate change initiative, includes two ambitious targets related to [SDG 15](#). The first target is to **plant 10 billion trees** across Saudi Arabia, rehabilitate **40 million hectares of land** and restore Saudi Arabia's natural greenery. Recycled water from an irrigation network will be used for this purpose. The second target is to **protect 30% of Saudi Arabia's terrestrial and marine area** by 2030 through a phased establishment of new protected areas. **SGI** promotes the sustainable use of natural resources and conserve the country's terrestrial ecosystems and wildlife through a range of measures, such as the creation of protected areas for wildlife and the promotion of sustainable land use practices. The initiative also aims to promote public awareness about the importance of conserving the country's natural resources and wildlife. Implemented through a whole-of-society effort. SGI will help to restore vital ecological functions, improve air quality, reduce sandstorms, and much more.

Saudi Arabia has identified desertification as one of the major challenges and is working to address this issue through a range of measures, such as improving land use practices, using water-saving technologies, promoting sustainable agriculture, and supporting the development of sustainable land management systems. The government has taken measures to protect and restore degraded forests and woodlands, as well as to promote sustainable forest management practices. In addition, the government has promoted sustainable wildlife management and the conservation of threatened and endangered species, including measures to conserve critical habitats and, prevent illegal hunting and trade in wildlife and wildlife products. Several **National Transformation Program** initiatives are working to safeguard land through initiatives that study and rehabilitate environmentally degraded and polluted sites. These include mining areas, quarries, construction waste dumps, abandoned agricultural lands, and other environmentally impactful sites across the kingdom. The aim is to evaluate and devise remediation plans for these sites that impact air, water, and soil quality.

Over the next eight years, Saudi Arabia aims to rehabilitate over 225,000 hectares of oases (rawdah) by planting more than 12 million trees in partnership with local communities. The country will also launch a vegetation cover and desertification combat initiative, involving 37 projects that will plant 4.6 million trees. To protect these vegetation cover sites, a protection initiative will be launched that includes establishing an operations room equipped with a smart control system to monitor field patrols. MEWA is launching a national forest monitoring and assessment system to track the health and status of forests in the country. Additionally, a national forest policy will be developed through a consultative process, ensuring input from various stakeholders. Lastly, an investment plan will be prepared to promote the sustainable development of forests and support their long-term conservation.

Saudi Arabia is also working to promote sustainable tourism, which can play a critical role in supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. This includes measures to support responsible tourism practices, such as the development of eco-friendly tourism products and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices.

Awareness programs encompass various initiatives, such as the **Youth Green Initiative Summit**, which is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of young Saudi leaders to ensure a more sustainable future. Another significant program is the **MEWA Water Conservation Awareness Program**, which aims to launch initiatives that promote water conservation and improve water-use efficiency throughout the country. Additionally, the **Let's Make it Green Campaign** focuses on conducting guided tours and implementing vegetation conservation activities within national parks, further emphasizing the importance of environmental preservation.

### Control of Red Palm Weevil

Infection of date palms with red palm weevil in the Kingdom dropped from 98% to 57% of trees in 2020, due to comprehensive administrative, field, technical and scientific measures.



The following are some additional components of the institutional framework for environmental protection in Saudi Arabia:

#### Key Components of the Institutional Framework for Environmental Protection in Saudi Arabia

National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification (NCVCCD) has responsibilities for the sustainable management of forests, rangelands, and national parks; protection of vegetation in all landscapes; and combating desertification. NCVCCD includes a technical directorate of forests charged with designing forest sector reforms.

Environment Fund contributes to the financial sustainability of the environment sector, providing enablers and supporting the operational budgets of centers, related programs, studies, and initiatives. The Fund supports the use of environmentally friendly technologies, improved environmental performance, and environmental rehabilitation programs.

National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development is tasked to conserve the country's wildlife and biodiversity.

Special Force for Environmental Security (SFES): Established in September 2018 under the Ministry of Interior, SFES helps raise environmental awareness. It enforces environmental regulations through environmental security monitoring, recording and investigating environmental complaints, and referring complaints to the relevant authorities.

### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

In the coming years, Saudi Arabia will focus on key areas such as further combating desertification and land degradation. Efforts will be made to increase the green cover in mountain areas through ongoing conservation and restoration efforts. The Saudi Green Initiative, which includes planting 10 billion trees and rehabilitating 40 million hectares of land, will play a crucial role in restoring and rehabilitating the country's natural greenery. Additionally, the goal of protecting 30% of Saudi Arabia's terrestrial and marine areas by 2030 will be achieved by establishing new protected areas. Addressing the challenges posed by desertification will involve establishing sustainable land management practices, improving land use, using water-saving technologies, and promoting sustainable agriculture. The government will strengthen the institutional framework for environmental protection, including organizations such as MEWA, the National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification, the Environment Fund, and the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development. Raising public awareness and fostering environmental stewardship will be crucial, with programs such as the Youth Green Initiative Summit, the MEWA Water Conservation Awareness Program, and the Let's Make it Green Campaign playing significant roles. Lastly, promoting sustainable tourism will help support biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, ultimately contributing to the protection and preservation of Saudi Arabia's environment.

#### The following are some key steps for the way forward:

- Expand afforestation and reforestation efforts, by planting 10 billion trees and rehabilitating 40 million hectares of land under the Saudi Green Initiative.
- Establish and expand protected areas by creating and strengthening protected areas to preserve critical habitats, support endangered species, and achieve the goal of protecting 30% of Saudi Arabia's terrestrial and marine areas by 2030.
- Implement sustainable land management practices to address desertification and land degradation by promoting sustainable agriculture, water-saving technologies, and improved land use practices.
- Further strengthen the institutional framework for environmental protection.
- Raise public awareness and foster environmental sustainability.
- Develop sustainable tourism by encouraging responsible tourism practices, developing eco-friendly tourism products, and promoting sustainable tourism to support biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

## SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND: NATIONAL CENTER FOR WILDLIFE

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

Created originally by royal decree in 1986, the national center for wildlife (NCW) aims to develop and implement plans to preserve wildlife in its natural ecology and to propose the establishment of proper protected areas and reserves for wildlife in the kingdom.



Early protection and restoration efforts focused on high profile animal species such as the Houbara Bustard or the Arabian oryx.



Today, the NCW manages a plethora of protected areas across the Kingdom, assisted by two research centers, the King Khalid wildlife research center (KKWRC) and Prince Saud Al Faisal Center for wildlife research.

### IMPACT



**16.2**  
Of protected wild land area



**5.5**  
Of protected marine area



**6**  
Endangered species included in breeding programs



**10**  
Agreements, memoranda, treaties and regulations reached



**15**  
Protected areas across the kingdom and more to come



**16**  
E-service for sustainable practices around fishing, imports and other services

### NEXT STEPS



The NCW aims to designate 22% of land and 24% of marine areas as protected by 2025, with the goal to reach 30% for both by 2030.



**NCW efforts are going to be intensified through three initiatives**

- Raising the percentage of protected areas
- Propagation and resettlement of endangered species
- Rehabilitation of damaged marine and coastal environments





# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia has taken steps to promote peace and stability, including efforts to improve human rights and access to justice. The government has introduced policies and initiatives, including improvements in data availability, to improve transparency and accountability in the public sector. The government has promoted social dialogue, especially in terms of engagement with civil society.

An important aspect of Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve **SDG 16** has been its work to enhance government performance, accountability, and transparency, as well as to promote civic engagement and public participation in decision-making processes. In addition, Saudi Arabia has strengthened integrity in public institutions and private sector organizations through measures to enhance anti-corruption and promote ethical behavior and business practices. As a result, Saudi Arabia has advanced 8 rankings from 83 to 75 in the World Bank's Government Effectiveness Index in the past five years. The Kingdom has achieved remarkable progress in its e-government efforts. The UN e-government Index (EGDI) shows that the Kingdom's rank has advanced from 52 in 2018 to 43 in 2020 and 31 in 2022. In addition, the Kingdom's rank in the E-Participation Index has jumped from 66 in 2020 to 43 in 2022. SDG data shows a shift towards more inclusive and gender-balanced institutions, with an overall increase in positions, particularly for females in the 25-34 age group, and an increase in the number of employed persons with disabilities from 2015 to 2020.

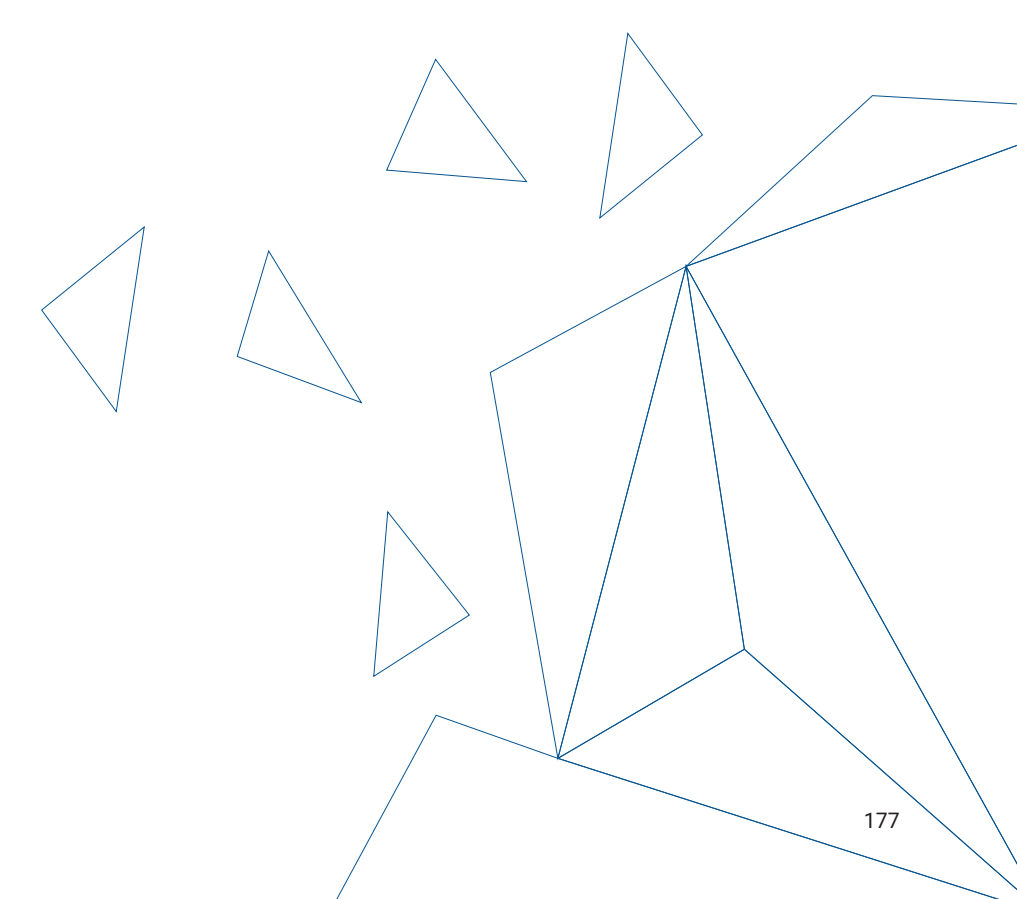
The government has promoted social dialogue, including the annual fora organized by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue, representatives of employers and workers, and other relevant parties. The last (12th) Social Dialogue Forum took place in January 2023 and was entitled: "Mechanisms to Support the Labor Market: Between Opportunities and Challenges".

## KSA advancement in the Corruption Perceptions Index

After promoting the value of transparency in government work by measuring the performance of public agencies including ministries, government agencies and funds, the Kingdom advanced in the Corruption Perceptions Index from the 57th position in 2017 to 52nd in 2020.

## An electronic system for collecting government revenues

Developing a collection method for non-oil state revenues using state-of-the-art modern technology to facilitate the collection of state revenues, preserve public money, and increase revenue. The system links to the SADAD system and government agencies. The system assists in collecting all government revenues, allowing beneficiaries to pay government fees through multiple payment methods with ease and provides data for more efficient analysis and tracking. It has been linked to over 400 government agencies.





# SDG 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS: Nazaha's Global Program on Measuring Corruption

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

The Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (NAZAHA) exercises international oversight and fights corruption while gathering data and compiling statistics. Its role is to coordinate efforts in the monitoring of corruption across the public and private sectors at home and abroad.



The project is intended to enhance the country's understanding of the extent and trends related to corruption.




The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has funded this project with \$1,9 million.




The ultimate goal is to develop a framework to analyze trends and emerging risk of corruption based on objective data.

### IMPACT

Percentage (%)	No. of reports	channel
49	21320	980
20	8643	email
16	6852	in person
6	2456	website
5	2289	mail
2	819	telegram
2	713	Fax
100	43182	Total



21,320 (or 49% of all reports for the year 2022) were filed in through the newly established 980 hotline



Total number of reports for 2022 fell by 30% in relation to the previous year.

Percentage (%)	Category
2646	Bribery
538	Abuse of influence
162	Forgery
55	Squander of Public Funds
269	Illicit Wealth
39	Waste of Public Funds
153	Exploit of Contacts
101	Embezzlement of
130	Abuse Power
72	Money Laundering
31	Mistreatment Coercion
4186	Total

Vast majority of reports filed in to date represent case of bribery and abuse power.

### NEXT STEPS

The completion of the framework is planned for December 2023, with pilot implementation in volunteering countries by mid-2024

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

Saudi Arabia has made considerable progress in enhancing the capacity of public institutions and organizations to respond to the needs and expectations of society and communities. The government has introduced several reforms in the public sector, such as a new system of government procurement, a new payroll system, and the modernization of the public services sector. These reforms have improved the efficiency and transparency of the public sector and have enhanced the delivery of public services to citizens.

**Nazaha**, Saudi Arabia's **Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority**, is actively implementing various initiatives to combat corruption such as monitoring government services, enhancing governance, promoting accountability, engaging with private and international sectors, and implementing assessment programs. Other initiatives involve revising the legal framework, raising awareness, building capacity, and contributing to international efforts, such as the Mecca Al Mukarramah Convention and the International Partnership against Corruption in Sports. Nazaha's recommended amendments to the Anti-Bribery Law led to a Royal Decree criminalizing the bribery of foreign public officials, and a dedicated department has been established to combat such offenses.

The **Ministry of Justice (MoJ)** has initiated the **Administrative Support and Organization at Courts Project** to revamp court administration through procedural restructuring, organizational charts, job descriptions, and a standard operational model, with the aim of increasing productivity, reducing the volume of lawsuits and appointments, accelerating decision-making, and improving the client experience and judicial support. The Ministry has also launched an initiative to establish **Legal Service Centers** outside of judicial facilities. These centers provide extended and late-hour services, including notarization, enforcement, as well as value-added services like legal translation, and sign language services. The ministry of Justice has also initiated the **Integration Project**, which provides 41 integrated services by connecting internal systems with external entities like the Central Bank of Saudi Arabia, the General Directorate of Prisons, the National Information Center, and several other organizations, to streamline justice services and administration. To improve the client experience, the MOJ has established a unified communication center and control rooms for answering clients' questions, inquiries, and complaints. **Qayyim** is a system launched by the MoJ to improve services by building a reference framework for the level of judicial services, measuring satisfaction based on international standards, responding rapidly to comments and complaints, and establishing an electronic portal for the ministry's services. The initiative "**Unified Security Operations Center (911)**" launched under the "**Quality of Life**" program has established a unified security operations centers and systems with 12 operations centers in order to unify and integrate all security sectors into central rooms in all regions of the Kingdom.

As noted under the **SDG 9** section of this report, Saudi Arabia has prioritized enhancing access to information and communications technology (ICT). This involves increasing internet accessibility and promoting the use of various digital platforms. Additionally, the country has focused on fostering digital literacy and skills to empower its citizens, while leveraging ICT to drive social and economic development. The following are some key initiatives that the Saudi government has taken to strengthen the ICT capacities of Saudi institutions:

**National Digital Government Strategy (NDGS)** provides a blueprint for digital governance in Saudi Arabia, with the goal of streamlining interactions between the government, individuals, and businesses. Key objectives include promoting integrated digital ID and authentication systems for widespread use and increasing the efficiency of digital government investments to develop a strong digital ecosystem.

**The e-Litigation Project** was launched by the Ministry of Justice to modernize and streamline the judicial system. It facilitates end-to-end electronic procedures, including filing, pleading, memorandum exchanges, and digital and virtual sessions, while upholding judicial safeguards like confrontation and public hearings. The project aims to expedite justice, enhance legal notarization, develop judicial assets, elevate the judiciary's reputation, reduce lawsuit influx, and improve legal services and institutional excellence. The Ministry of Justice has initiated the **Judgment Modeling Project** on the e-Litigation platform. Creating over 1,500 digital forms, including lawsuit and response forms. It has also incorporated judicial classifications to standardize judgment instruments in all courts of first instance and appeal.

**Integrated Enforcement Project** was launched by the MoJ to digitize enforcement into judicially supervised e-services, and save money for direct judicial interventions, through department centralization and procedure automation, enhancing service quality, operational efficiency, and case handling capacity while reducing case influx. Moreover, the **Administrative Support and Organization of Courts Project** was launched to streamline court procedures, bolster operational efficiency, and improve the client experience.

**Integrated Notarization System** was launched by the Ministry of Justice to focus on the full digitization of the notarial system, including powers of attorney, declarations, probate certifications, charters, and property notarizations. In addition, it automates all administrative and ICT operations supporting the notarial system, and facilitates the preparation of statistical reports supporting decision making, enhancing real estate security and improving legal notarization. Moreover, the **Digitization of Property Title Archive Project** was launched to digitize all real estate property documents.

**E-Payment** is an initiative of the Ministry of Justice to automate payment procedures related to court-ordered enforcement instruments. By allowing electronic payments from enforcement debtors, it eliminates the need for checks or cash. The initiative expedites payment and collection processes, strengthens monitoring and control, and enhances the client experience.

**Najiz Platform and Entrustment and Liquidation Center “Infath”** is an initiative of the Ministry of Justice to fully digitize procedures via the Integrated Case Management System. Automating administrative and ICT activities, the Najiz Platform simplifies the statement of claim process by reducing case classifications from 1,300 to 300. Additionally, “Infath” accelerates the enforcement of court decisions and the liquidation of inheritances, companies, funds, and stocks, cutting the average liquidation period from 180 days to 91 days.

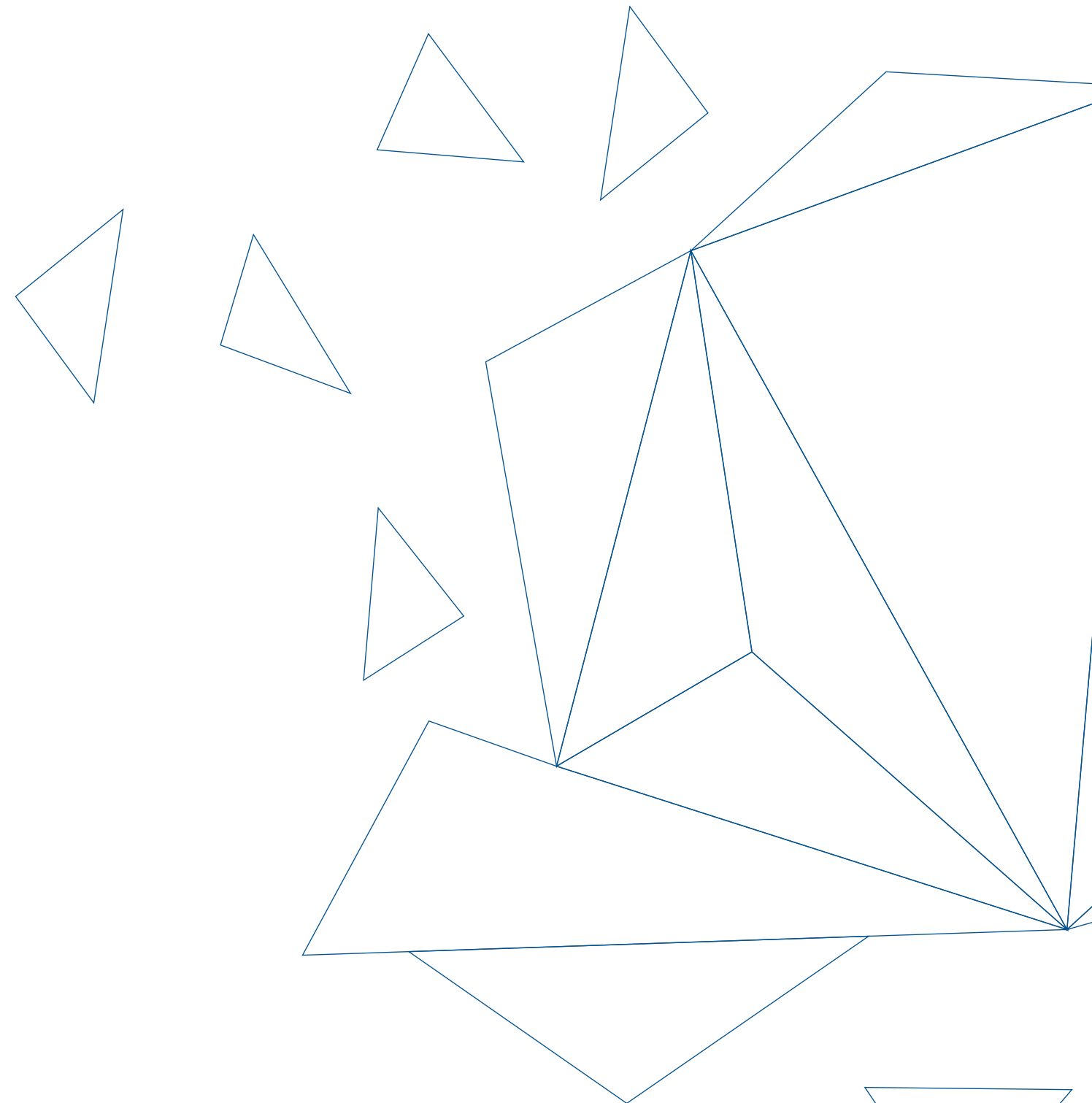
### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

An important aspect of Saudi Arabia’s governance system will be the enhancement of the efficiency and transparency of public institutions. Government performance, accountability, and transparency will be enhanced through initiatives such as Nazaha, the National Digital Government Strategy, e-government, and the modernization of public services. Ensuring efficient use of resources in government projects will be promoted by strengthening the role of the Authority for Spending Efficiency and Government Projects.

Attention will be paid to enhancing access to justice and legal services for all by supporting the Ministry of Justice in expanding Legal Service Centers, promoting the e-Litigation Project, implementing the Integrated Notarization System and other similar initiatives in the justice sector. Social dialogue will be promoted through existing fora and other platforms, allowing citizens to better engage with public institutions. Leveraging technology for social and economic development is another key area that Saudi Arabia will continue to prioritize. This includes improving access to information and communications technology, digital literacy, and skill development in order to empower citizens and drive social and economic progress.

**The following are some key steps for the way forward:**

- Further improve access to justice and legal services through measures such as expanding Legal Service Centers, promoting the e-Litigation Project, and implementing the Integrated Notarization System.
- Continue efforts to improve government transparency and efficiency through ongoing initiatives such as the National Digital Government Strategy and e-government initiatives to streamline interactions between the government, citizens, and businesses.
- Further support and strengthen the capacity of Nazaha to investigate and prosecute corruption cases, and continue refining the legal framework to address all forms of corruption.
- Further promote civic engagement and public participation by using existing social dialogue fora and by establishing additional platforms for citizens to contribute to institutional processes.
- Further the culture of integrity and ethical behavior in public institutions and private sector organizations by promoting ethical business practices, and raising awareness on the importance of ethical conduct.
- Leverage technology for social and economic development by improving access to information and communications technology, digital literacy, and skill development.





# 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



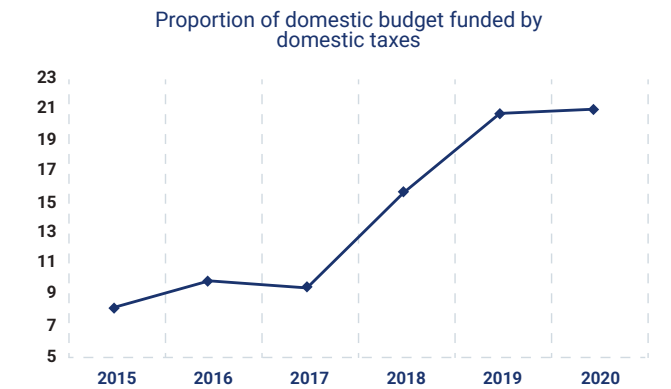
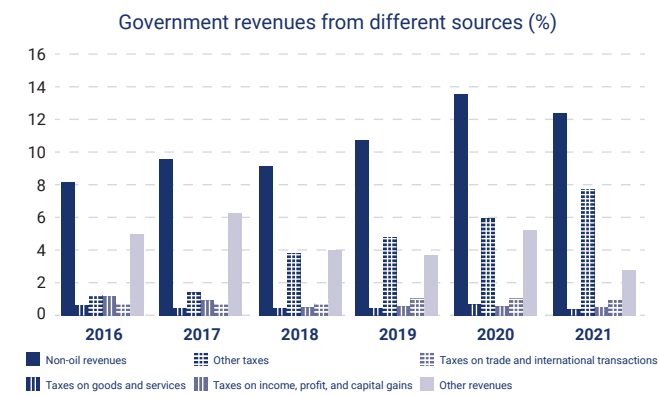




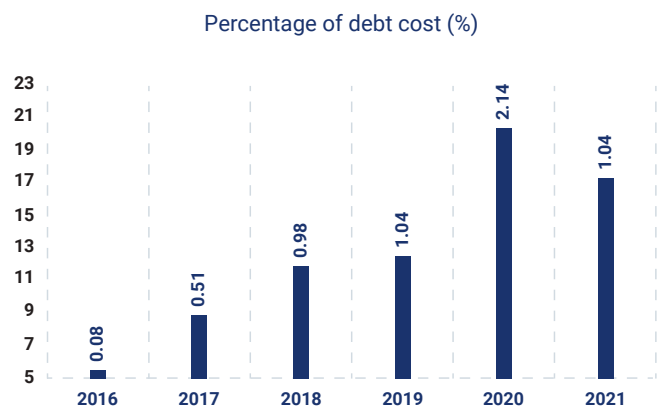
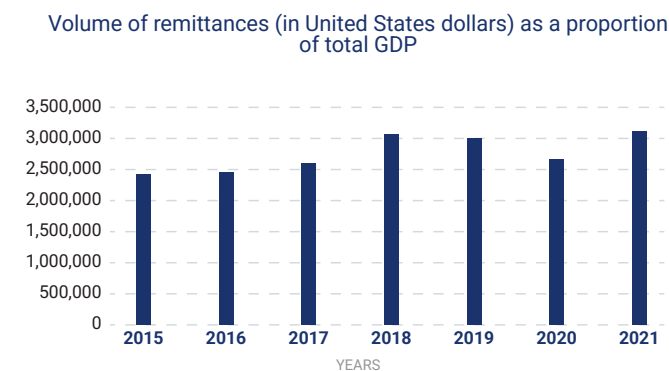
# 1. General Situation

Saudi Arabia is a top provider of financial and technical support to developing countries. The kingdom has continuously intensified its engagement in international development cooperation and assistance efforts. As a member of G20, Saudi Arabia has played a significant role in shaping global economic and environmental policies and decisions.

SDG data from GASTAT suggests that Saudi Arabia has been diversifying its revenue sources. The data also indicates an increasing emphasis on domestic tax revenue for financing the country's domestic budget, suggesting a shift towards greater fiscal self-reliance.



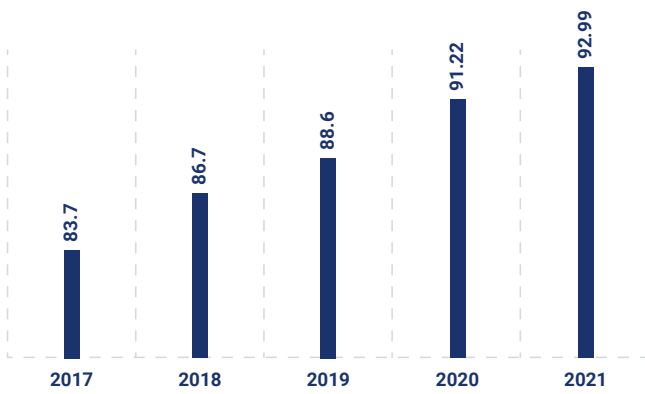
Saudi Arabia's total development assistance has increased over time, with the highest value in 2021 at \$44.99 billion and the lowest in 2017 at \$17.54 billion. The proportion of total development assistance as a proportion of the national budget increased between 2015 and 2021, from 3.5% to 4.43%. The data reveals that the volume of remittances in Saudi Arabia as a proportion of GDP experienced fluctuations between 2015 and 2021. Nevertheless, these contributions have been significant, standing at a level of 5% of GDP. The cost of debt services as a percentage of GDP increased between 2016 and 2020, with a drop in 2021.



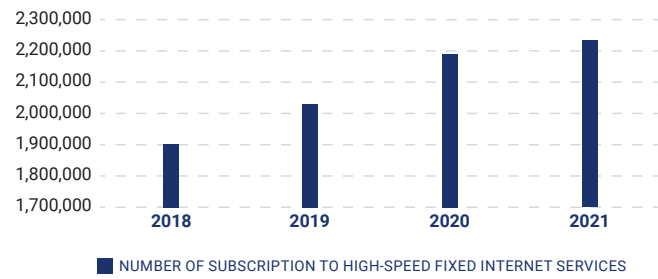
The fixed internet broadband subscription data indicates an increasing trend in recent years, with a growing percentage of the population gaining access to high-speed internet services. The SDG data from GASTAT shows a steady increase in the proportion of people using the internet, particularly among individuals aged 15 years and above.



Proportion of people using internet (15 years and above) (%)

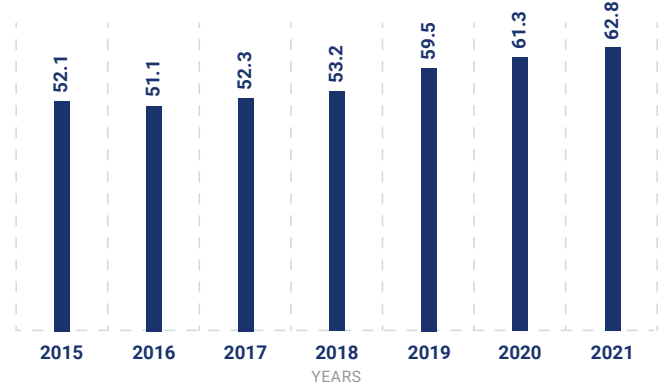


Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions



SDG data from GASTAT also indicates that the proportion of exports from developing and least developed countries in relation to Saudi Arabia's total exports has been growing. The tariffs faced by developing countries in their trade with Saudi Arabia have not followed a consistent pattern, but the overall trend shows a slight increase in tariffs faced by these countries in recent years.

Shares of exports by developing countries and least developed countries



Weighted average tariffs faced by developing countries



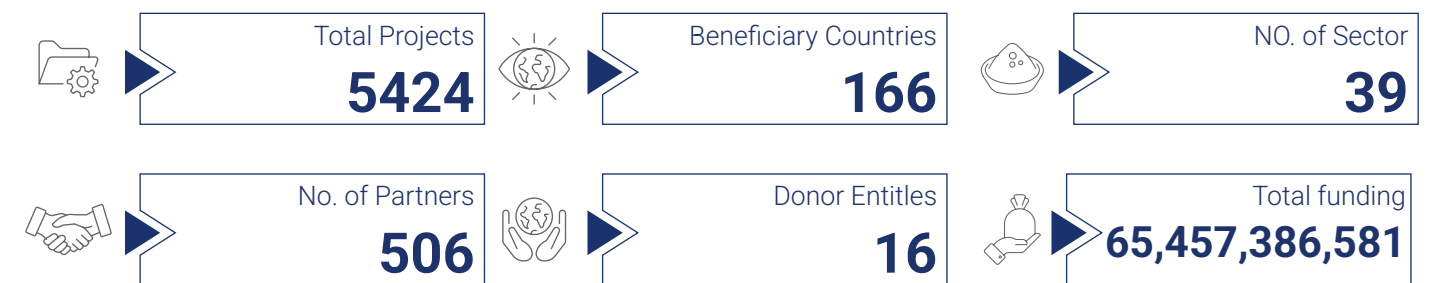
Saudi Arabia has a long history of providing humanitarian aid and development assistance to low- and middle-income countries. Saudi Arabia's many charitable and humanitarian initiatives, guided by its Islamic principles, are a testament to its unwavering dedication to international development. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been among the world's most generous donors for many years. In 2022 the Kingdom was ranked 8th globally in terms of humanitarian assistance according to the UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service (UNTF). According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC), in 2021, the Kingdom was ranked the 1st donor globally in providing official development assistance as a percentage of its gross national income (1.05%).

### Saudi Arabia's Aid Agencies

- KSRELIEF**  
 International center dedicated to humanitarian and relief work. The aid provided by KSRelief covers a wide range of initiatives, including relief security, camps management, shelter, early recovery, protection, education, water and sanitation, among others. KSRelief is the only authority in the Kingdom that is permitted to provide in-kind assistance to international beneficiaries.
- SFD**  
 The Saudi Fund for Development is a government entity that serves as a vehicle through which Saudi Arabia provides concessional loans and grants on behalf of the Saudi Government to finance development projects in developing countries. The projects financed by SFD focus primarily on infrastructure and productivity, most notably in the sectors of transportation, communication, agriculture, energy and social infrastructure. The Fund is the main vehicle through which Saudi Arabia provides development assistance.

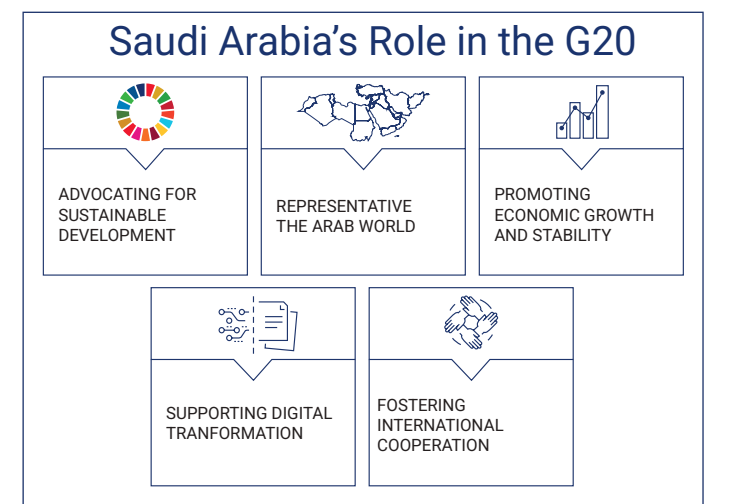
Saudi Arabia participates actively in international development cooperation and assistance efforts through financial and technical support to developing countries. This includes engagement with the United Nations, the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, and other international organizations, in order to support the development of sustainable infrastructure and other key sectors in developing countries. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has provided international assistance bilaterally through two main national agencies: the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) and the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). KSRelief, established in 2015, has provided more than \$6 billion in humanitarian assistance to 91 countries so far. SFD was established to finance projects in developing countries. Established in 1974, its has contributed over \$18 billion to finance more than 700 development projects across 85 countries, primarily in Africa and Asia, targeting sectors like social infrastructure, transportation, and agriculture. The digital charity platform "Al Khair Al Raqami" was also founded to support sustainable development goals. Furthermore, the Misk Charitable Association has introduced multiple programs and initiatives to aid in these efforts.

Based on data from the Saudi Aid Platform, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has historically provided \$87.5 billion in international aid. The Kingdom has delivered \$54.4 billion in development assistance, \$11 billion in humanitarian assistance and \$149 million in charity. The assistance has been delivered to 166 beneficiary countries through 5,424 projects across 39 sectors.



Another way Saudi Arabia contributes to other countries is through its mostly foreign workforce. Expat workers make up three-quarters of all workers in the Kingdom, coming from countries like Syria, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. The Kingdom is the third largest exporter of remittances in the world. Remittances alleviate poverty, improve nutritional outcomes, increase education expenditure, and reduce child labor.

**Saudi Presidency of G20** - Saudi Arabia is a member of the Group of Twenty (G20), which brings together the world's largest economies to discuss key economic and financial issues. As a G20 member, Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in shaping global economic policies and decisions. During its G20 presidency, the Kingdom steered the group towards "seizing the opportunities of the twenty-first century for all" with a focus on three main goals: empowering people, protecting the planet, and shaping new horizons through the digital economy and employing innovative technologies. During its presidency, the Kingdom paid great attention to sustainable development issues and directed efforts to adopt a sustainable and results-oriented perspective.




The G20 Group affirmed its determination to continue to play a leading role in contributing to the rapid implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Furthermore, the Saudi G20 presidency took swift action to pave the way for a better world for the post-COVID-19 era, and launched an initiative to suspend debt service payments that enabled 46 of the poorest and most vulnerable countries to access liquidity from official bilateral lenders. This initiative made it possible to postpone the repayment of \$14 billion in outstanding debts in 2020, and to benefit from these amounts and employ them in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts.

## 2. Institutional Framework and Key Ongoing Initiatives

### Middle East Green Initiative (MGI)






The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is leading the establishment of the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI), which is a regional effort to mitigate the impact of climate change on the region and to collaborate to meet global climate targets. By increasing regional cooperation and creating the infrastructure needed to reduce emissions and protect the environment, MGI is envisaged to amplify the impact in the global fight against climate change, while creating far-reaching economic opportunities for the region. To accelerate the implementation of initiatives to achieve the MGI goals, HRH the Crown Prince announced in November 2022 that Saudi Arabia will establish and host a dedicated MGI Secretariat and will allocate \$2.5 billion to support MGI projects and governance. Under the Middle East Green Initiative, Saudi Arabia seeks to unify stakeholders across the region to prevent, mitigate and adapt to the risks posed by climate change.



DURING THE SAUDI G20 PRESIDENCY, G20 LEADERS ENDORSED THE CIRCULAR CARBON ECONOMY (CCE) FRAMEWORK

**A closed-loop system, GCE is based on reducing, reusing, recycling, and removing carbon that addresses climate change while advancing sustainable development and promoting economic diversification. By reducing emissions and expanding the use of carbon capture, utilization, and storage, the international community will be able to pursue sustainable growth and reconcile the sustainability needs of both energy and climate.**

### Climate change knows no borders

 <p>Across the Middle East and North Africa, the repercussions of rising temperatures are already impacting livelihoods and opportunities.</p>	 <p>Extreme weather events including droughts and heavy rains will become more common in the region if global temperatures continue to increase.</p>	 <p>The economic impact of dust storms in the region exceeds \$13 billion annually.</p>	 <p>In order to achieve effective climate action, an alliance is required that will unify and support relevant stakeholders across the region.</p>	 <p>MGI exists to unite leaders across the region to achieve the common goal of combating climate change.</p>
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Saudi Arabia is also playing a leading role in establishing centers and programs that will help the Middle East region deliver against the MGI targets. This infrastructure will play a crucial role in supporting the knowledge exchange necessary to protect the environment, reduce emissions, and raise regional coordination. Additionally, the centers and programs will help to attract investment on key focus areas such as the circular carbon economy and afforestation.

## CENTERS AND PROGRAMS TO BE ESTABLISHED UNDER MGI

### MIDDLE EAST GREEN INITIATIVE (MGI)



### Trade, investment and innovation

The Saudi government has created a favorable investment climate to attract foreign investment and support economic growth and sustainable development. Saudi Arabia is promoting technological cooperation and innovation, including through measures to enhance its participation in the development and transfer of new technologies. This includes efforts to enhance its collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders, and to promote the development and application of new technologies for sustainable development. Saudi Arabia has made significant commitments and investments in sustainable development initiatives, both domestically and internationally. This includes investments in renewable energy and clean technology, as well as efforts to promote sustainable urbanization and sustainable infrastructure development.

### Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF)

has become a global player, supplying international financial markets with abundant capital. PIF has launched two international investment pools, International Strategic Investments and International Diversified Pool, to expand its global reach beyond the Kingdom and MENA region. By partnering with top-tier international investors, asset managers, and investment banks, PIF has become one of the world's largest investment institutions. The volume of international investments has grown from 5% in 2017 to 30% of assets under management, diversifying across geographies and various asset classes including public and private markets, stocks, fixed income, real estate, and infrastructure. PIF's diversified investments span multiple sectors like healthcare, technology, real estate, and transportation.

### International Cooperation

Saudi Arabia has been actively involved in regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment. Saudi Arabia has been an active player in global governance mechanisms and processes related to sustainable development. This includes efforts to enhance its participation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Other key climate initiatives in which Saudi Arabia plays a key role are shown in the box below.



- ▶ Saudi Arabia sees international cooperation as an essential enabler for achieving global climate goals, especially in the area of innovation and R&D, for advancing clean energy technologies including those that are needed for achieving net-zero ambitions such as Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) and Direct Air Capture, as well as low carbon hydrogen solutions.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia is a founding member of Mission Innovation, leading and contributing to many missions including the Carbon Removal mission, Hydrogen mission, and Power mission.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia is a member of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), co-leading its CCUS initiative, and participating in many other initiatives.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia alongside the US, Qatar, Norway, and Canada, launched the Net Zero Producers Forum, which aims at developing pragmatic Net Zero strategies, including methane abatement, advancing the Circular Carbon Economy, and development and deployment of clean energy technologies and CCUS.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia also plays a key role in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where it promotes issues and efforts related to sustainable development and environmental protection.

The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) participates in the Arab Coordination Group (ACG), which is a coalition of 10 regional and international organizations that collaboratively support impactful development projects. SFD is dedicated to contributing to ACG initiatives such as addressing climate change with a \$24 billion commitment announced at COP27, and tackling food security with a \$10 billion pledge. Through KSRelief, Saudi Arabia contributes to the Islamic Development Bank's Live and Livelihoods Fund, a \$2.5 billion initiative launched with five other regional and global organizations to alleviate poverty in vulnerable member countries. Saudi Arabia has also played a key role in the global response to the pandemic. The Kingdom was a major contributor to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility, a structure that ensured equitable access to vaccines globally. Additionally, Saudi Arabia provided medical and humanitarian aid to several countries in need, including sending medical teams and supplies to support local health systems.

**Data** – Saudi Arabia is taking great systematic steps towards the path of open data and free access, thus allowing it to contribute towards enhancing transparency in the implementation of government transactions, consolidating the principle of accountability within the government sector, and facilitating public evaluation and analysis of the content.

- The Saudi government has launched the **National Strategy for Statistical Development**, which under GASTAT's leadership aims to establish an effective, professional, and credible statistical system by 2030. By focusing on five strategic axes, the strategy fosters collaboration between data users and producers, while incorporating the latest technologies and enhancing communication and awareness.
- To uphold the principle of transparency, encourage electronic involvement, and foster creativity, the government has established an integrated data base of open government data that provides access to a wide range of data and statistics on various socio-economic indicators. The National Open Data Portal allows people to access, download, and use the data of ministries and government agencies in the Kingdom.
- **The Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA)** was established to drive the national agenda for data and AI to elevate the Kingdom as a global leader in the elite league of data driven economies. SDAIA has developed the National Strategy for Data & AI, which was approved on July 17, 2020. SDAIA is now working with other government entities to activate the initiatives under the strategy. SDAIA has also created a suite of data-related AI applications, which are summarized in the figure below.
- **Personal Data Protection Law** - In September 2021, Saudi Arabia passed a Personal Data Protection Law as a sector-agnostic data privacy law. The implementation guidelines are under development. In the interim, SDAIA, through the National Data Management Office (NDMO), has published the Personal Data Protection Interim Regulations (PDPIR). The new law is based on the General Data Protection Guidelines with a few modifications to data transfer and localization requirements. All organizations that process Saudi citizens' data are legally bound by this law.

**Saudi Initiative for AIDS Control in GCC Countries** – The initiative is aimed at enhancing opportunities for health support dedicated to combating HIV in the Gulf, being that the Gulf is an appealing region for numerous expatriates from various nationalities for multiple reasons such as work, tourism and religious rituals. These factors highlight the nations importance worldwide in relation to its economic and financial impact. The initiative was launched by the Ministry of Health, in coordination with the Executive Office of the GCC Council of Health Ministries in the wake of numerous international conferences being held over the years, which observed aspects and experiences of countries combating AIDS.

**Clean Fuel Solutions for Cooking** – Saudi Arabia has launched this initiative with the objective of providing clean cooking solutions such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and renewable energy to 750 million people around the world as an alternative to traditional cooking methods such as coal and wood, which can cause harm to the environment due to their excessive carbon emissions as well as to human health, mostly women, by causing respiratory illnesses.

### 3. Key Areas for Attention and Next Steps

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that global cooperation and partnership to achieve the SDG goals is more urgent than ever. The Kingdom will continue its efforts to enhance cooperation with the United Nations and its partners to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals regionally and internationally, which will positively reflect on improving the quality of human life wherever they are, and on increasing the capabilities and readiness of countries to address crises that may occur in the future.

As one of the most generous donors in the world, Saudi Arabia is expanding its humanitarian aid and development assistance efforts. As part of its efforts to boost sustainable development initiatives, Saudi Arabia is committed to investing in renewable energy, clean technology, including carbon capture utilization storage and direct air capture, and sustainable urbanization, both domestically and internationally. Tackling climate change is another key focus, with the country leading the establishment of the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) to mitigate the impact of climate change and collaborate on meeting global climate targets. Enhancing digital connectivity is also a priority, with a focus on increasing internet access and promoting digital literacy. The government will further attract foreign investment, enhance its participation in the global economy, and promote technological cooperation and innovation in order to boost international trade and investment.

Supporting global health initiatives is also an important area of attention for Saudi Arabia. The country has contributed to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility and provided medical and humanitarian aid to countries in need. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is committed to enhancing data accessibility and transparency through initiatives such as the National Strategy for Statistical Development, the National Open Data Portal, and the Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA). Continued attention will be given to ongoing initiatives to address health and environmental challenges, such as the Saudi Initiative for AIDS control in GCC Countries and Clean Fuel Solutions for Cooking.

**The following are some key steps for the way forward:**

- Strengthen and expand international partnerships by deepening collaboration with international organizations, countries, and the private sector to share knowledge, technology, and resources in addressing global challenges and achieving the SDGs.
- Increase investments in digital infrastructure and expand high-speed internet access, especially in rural and remote areas, and promote digital literacy and skills development among the population.
- Promote innovation and technological cooperation and encourage research and development, foster innovation in various sectors, and support the transfer of technology and knowledge.
- Continue investments in renewable energy, clean technology, and sustainable urbanization both domestically and internationally to address environmental challenges and support global sustainability goals.
- Spearhead the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) by providing resources and technical support, and promoting regional collaboration on climate change issues.
- Enhance transparency and accessibility of data by continuously updating and expanding the National Open Data Portal and promoting the use of data-driven decision-making processes across various sectors.
- Strengthen support for global health initiatives, provide medical and humanitarian aid to countries in need, and collaborate with regional and international partners to address emerging health challenges.
- Develop policies that attract foreign investment, encourage entrepreneurship, and support the growth of the private sector.

### National Data Governance Regulations

Seven new policies have been adopted that contributed to raising the level of data and AI:

- **Data Classification:** Securing the confidentiality of national data and classifying it at four levels.
- **Open Data:** Making open data and information available to all beneficiaries.
- **Sharing Data:** Improving data sharing to integrate government agencies and obtain data from their sources.
- **Personal Data Protection:** Organizing the process of gathering, processing, disclosing, and maintaining national sovereignty over personal data.

- **Freedom of Information:** Regulating beneficiaries' access to open information or obtaining it, regardless of forms, from government agencies.
- **General Regulations for Disclosure of Data Outside the Geographical Borders of the Kingdom:** Ensuring that the disclosure of personal data outside the Kingdom's geographical borders is regulated, as well as preserve the national sovereignty of this data and the privacy of persons concerned.
- **Protecting the Personal Data of Minors:** Protecting minors and similar demographics from inappropriate content and advertisements on the Internet, as well as assisting relevant authorities to protect them from the risks of collecting and processing this personal information.

## SDG 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS: THE SAUDI DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR YEMEN

### SUMMARY

The Saudi development and reconstruction program for Yemen (SDRPY) was established in May 2018 through a Royal Decree. Given the earlier international experience in the development of Yemen, SDRPY's development strategy was created by a group of Saudi specialists with the aim of meeting the needs of the people of Yemen, providing institutional, Technical, and logistical support to Yemen, and building the capacity of Yemeni government institutions.

#### THEME I

Raising the efficiency and effectiveness of support

#### THEME II

Supporting in the reconstruction

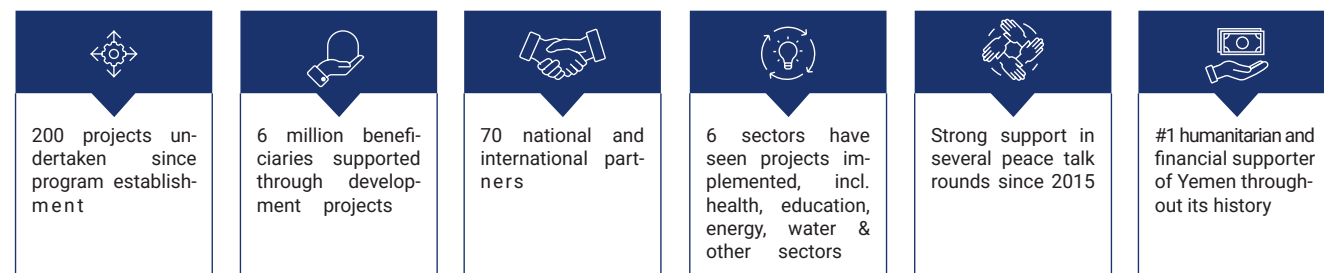
#### THEME III

Building partnerships and international cooperation

#### THEME IV

Promoting sustainable development

### IMPACT



### NEXT STEPS

Continued implementation of ongoing and planned projects



## Summary of Saudi Arabia's Achievement of SDGs

As the 17 sections of this report dedicated to each SDG area have shown, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in achieving SDGs across all social, economic, and environmental dimensions. The table below provides an overview of the trends in the progress that Saudi Arabia has made based on SDG indicators for all SDGs areas. As can be seen from the table, out of a total of 116 SDG indicators for which official data from GASTAT is available, 56 indicators show an improving trend, 7 exhibit a non-improving trend, and 22 have no discernible trend. Insufficient data is available for 31 indicators, making it difficult to evaluate their progress.

SDGs	Improving Trend	Nonimproving Trend	No Trend	Insufficient Data	Total
SDG 1	5		1		6
SDG 2	3	1	1	2	7
SDG 3	10	3	4	10	27
SDG 4	3			8	11
SDG 5	2		1		3
SDG 6	3			1	4
SDG 7	2			1	3
SDG 8	3	1	4	1	9
SDG 9	2	2	1	2	7
SDG 10	3		2	2	7
SDG 11	5				5
SDG 12	3		1	1	5
SDG 13	1				1
SDG 14	2				2
SDG 15	1		2	2	5
SDG 16	1		1	1	3
SDG 17	7		4		11
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>116</b>

Saudi Arabia's achievements are recognized by the Sustainable Development Report (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards), which is an independent global assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup> Sachs et al. (2022): From Crisis to Sustainable Development: the SDGs as Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond. Sustainable Development Report 2022. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



As can be seen from the figure above, the global assessment shows that Saudi Arabia has experienced improving trends in most SDG areas and has not had any SDG areas with a decreasing trend. Only three SDGs have experienced stagnating trends: SDG 14, 15, and 16. It should be noted here that this assessment is based on data for 2020, a year that was marked by the significant challenges ensuing from the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, in 2021 Saudi Arabia launched the Saudi Green Initiative – an ambitious multibillion-dollar initiative directly targeted at the challenges in the two SDG areas for which the global assessment shows stagnation (SDG 14 and SDG 15).

The picture that emerges from the information presented in each SDG section of this report is that of a dynamic institutional and policy framework in support of the achievement of SDGs. The Kingdom has launched a wide array of initiatives that address various aspects of the SDGs. For example, under SDG 1, the country is taking a comprehensive approach to job creation, social protection, economic growth, and financial inclusion.

SDG 2 is underpinned by the implementation of a food security strategy, progress in addressing malnutrition, and preservation of plant genetic resources. In the area of SDG 3, the government is focused on improvements in healthcare access, reduction in mortality rates, and strong commitment to immunization. SDG 4 has seen an expansion of access to education, near gender parity in educational participation, and large public investments in education. SDG 5 is marked by progress in promoting gender equality, increased participation of women in the workforce, and implementation of laws enhancing women's rights. In the area of SDG 6, the country has increased access to clean water and sanitation services, investment in wastewater treatment, and water conservation initiatives. SDG 7 is notable for universal access to electricity, commitment to renewable energy, and implementation of energy efficiency initiatives. Under SDG 8, there has been progress in job creation, economic growth, increased female labor force participation, and the tackling of youth unemployment. Under SDG 9, the country has invested in infrastructure, industrial development, and innovation, promoting economic diversification and fast digitalization. SDG 10 has seen progress in reducing income inequality and promoting social inclusion through government initiatives. Saudi Arabia has improved urban planning and infrastructure under SDG 11, focusing on sustainable cities and communities. In SDG 12, the country has promoted sustainable consumption and production practices. Significant steps have been taken in SDG 13 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change, such as launching the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI).

SDG 14 has seen a prioritization of marine and coastal ecosystem protection, while SDG 15 focuses on biodiversity protection and combating desertification. Under SDG 16, Saudi Arabia has improved human rights and access to justice, enhancing transparency and accountability in the public sector. Lastly, for SDG 17, Saudi Arabia has built strong partnerships to achieve SDGs and provided significant humanitarian and development assistance globally.

Despite the impressive progress that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made since the launch of the sustainable development agenda in 2015, challenges remain, and the government is committed to addressing them resolutely. The launching of the SGI and MGI initiatives is an example of major initiatives to address the challenges of climate change and environmental protection. Another SDG-related area where the government's attention will focus in the near future is the need to improve data availability and strengthening the capacity of statistical departments across the government to collect and disseminate information on key SDG indicators. The focus will be on identifying and adopting innovative and cost-efficient data collection methodologies and technologies in all SDG areas. Efforts will be made to collect and make available data in a disaggregated fashion, particularly in terms of gender, age, disability, and nationality, as well as ensuring the availability of regional statistics.

## Saudi Arabia's COVID-19 Response

Saudi Arabia prioritized addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing from its experience with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-COV) and implementing preventive measures even before the first domestic case emerged. As the situation escalated, the government established comprehensive measures to protect public health, mitigate the economic impact, and ensure an effective response, while collaborating with the UN. The following are the measures that Saudi Arabia took to address the COVID-19 challenges, informed by the analytical work conducted jointly with UN agencies:



Kingdom's Measures to Counter COVID-19 Establishment of a national committee	
Multiple government ministers	Following global updates
Collaborating on preparing a national response strategy	
Flight Suspension	
Suspension of all direct flights between Saudi Arabia and China	
Inbound Travel Suspension	
Suspension of inbound travel from COVID-affected countries	
Entry Suspension	
Suspension of entry for international Umrah pilgrims	
Tourist Visa Entry Suspension	
Suspension of entry to the Kingdom via tourist visas	

**Containment Measures:** In response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government implemented strict measures to protect citizens and residents. These included lockdowns, business closures, remote work for non-essential employees, social distancing, mandatory face masks, public gathering bans, travel restrictions, and even the suspension of prayer in mosques. These steps significantly impacted daily life but played a crucial role in managing the pandemic effectively and safeguarding the wellbeing of the country during a difficult period.

**Health Response:** The Ministry of Health took comprehensive and proactive measures against the pandemic, including providing health information and guidelines, free services such as PCR testing, diagnosis, treatment, and a 24/7 hotline, and participating in COVID-19 research. The National Emergency Response Committee was established, and free COVID-19 treatment was provided to all citizens and residents regardless of legal status. Contact tracing and testing initiatives, mobile applications, and the expansion of laboratory capacity helped the Kingdom conduct over 45 million COVID-19 PCR tests. The government equipped primary healthcare centers, hospitals, and quarantine facilities, designated reference hospitals, introduced dedicated ambulance teams, and installed field hospitals. Private healthcare facilities, home medical care, and telemedicine centers were activated to relieve strain on Ministry of Health facilities. Digital health services and applications, such as Tabaud and Tetamman, were used extensively to reduce the number of visits to healthcare facilities and monitor cases. The Kingdom launched a comprehensive national vaccination campaign, utilizing traditional methods like mass media campaigns and modern approaches like mobile applications for registration. The campaign aimed at raising awareness about the importance of vaccines and addressing vaccine hesitancy. Communication played a crucial role in the response, with campaigns providing factual information and dispelling myths, SMS messaging services for local updates, a hotline number for advice and assistance, and online portals for access to vital information such as test results or treatment options.

**Economic and Financial Support:** The pandemic had a negative impact on the Saudi economy, causing a decline in oil revenues and a 6.8% GDP contraction in 2020. To mitigate the crisis, the government introduced an emergency package that included financial aid, business loans, tax cuts, suspension of government payments, and various support initiatives like "Tatweer" and "Waseelah". Coordinated efforts from a wide range of ministries and development banks and funds, including the Ministry of Investment, the Ministry of Finance, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA), the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources (MODON), and the Saudi Export Development Authority, resulted in a SAR 70 billion private sector support package, budgetary reallocations, and a SAR 120 billion allocation for private sector support, encompassing employment support, training programs, and assistance to micro and small enterprises.

## Financial Support for SMEs in the Context of COVID-19



**Kafalah Program** affiliated with “Monsha’at”, the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises



The aim of the allocation was to provide the necessary support for owners of SMEs and their workers, in the interest of the Kingdom’s government to maintain the continuity of the participation of the SMEs in the economy.

SAR 450 Million

SAR allocated approximately \$119.7 million in loan guarantees to alleviate the repercussions of 450 million COVID-19 on local SMEs.

- Digitalization:** The government focused on digitalization and innovation to improve health outcomes and the healthcare system, such as implementing telemedicine platforms and electronic medical records. Additionally, the government ensured students’ access to distance learning through a centralized learning platform, assistance for students in need, and measures to enhance learning quality and outcomes, including fostering collaboration between parents and schools.
- Research:** The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) contributed to COVID-19 response efforts by collecting 6342 samples to study genetic factors influencing symptom variation in Saudi society, ultimately publishing two scientific papers and demonstrating their dedication to advancing research and combating the pandemic. KACST also launched research accelerators for COVID-19, offering a fast track for proposal review and approval to expedite pandemic-focused research.
- International Engagement:** The Saudi government actively participated in international COVID-19 response efforts, presiding over the G20 extraordinary summit in March 2020, which resulted in G20 leaders committing to necessary health measures and injecting \$10 trillion into the global economy. Additionally, the G20 pledged \$21 billion globally to fight the pandemic through various efforts. Saudi Arabia collaborated closely with the United Nations and other organizations, providing bilateral assistance, donations, and funding for vaccine research totaling over \$1 billion, including a \$90 million donation to the World Health Organization (WHO) for implementing the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) and supporting the (WHO) office in Yemen.
- Leaving No One Behind:** Protection of the most vulnerable was at the heart of the COVID-19 response. Health authorities made the pivotal decision to provide free COVID-19 services, testing and treatment to everyone, including individuals with irregular residency status. This equal access to services for everyone minimized the impact of COVID-19 on migrants and other vulnerable groups. Development funds and banks allocated of SAR 4 billion to provide social loans to low-income families during 2020.

## Means of Implementation

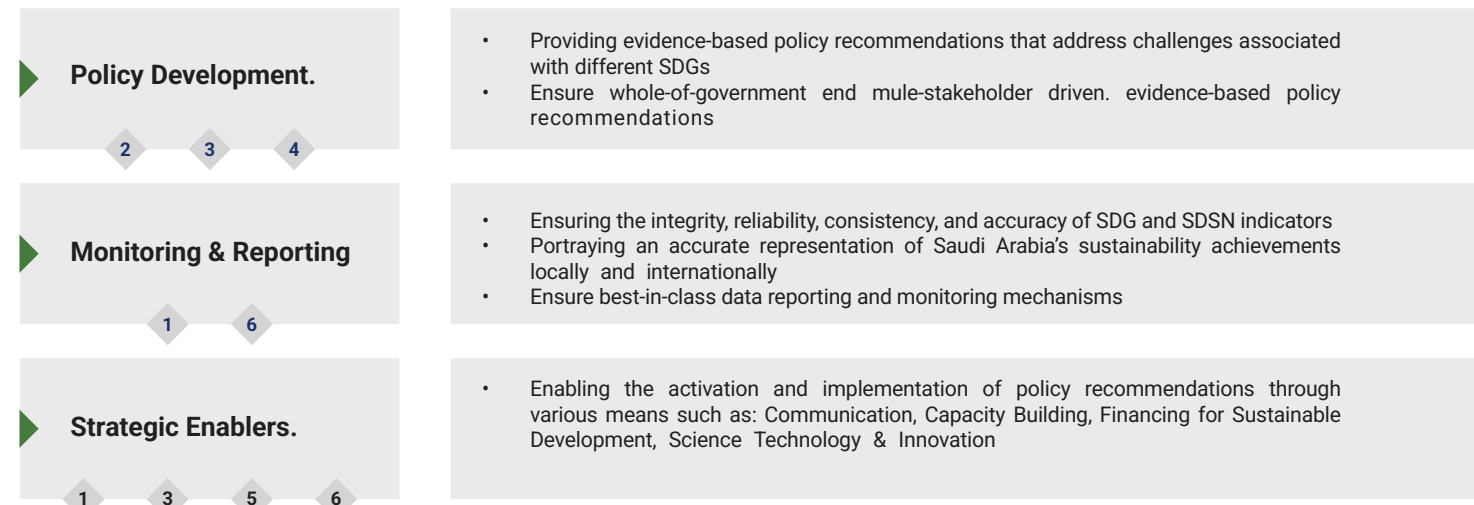
This section of the VNR report provides an overview of the strategies, policies, and resources that Saudi Arabia has put in place to achieve the SDGs. At the heart of Saudi Arabia’s SDG implementation agenda lies a “**Roadmap for Implementation**” that the government has developed to ensure that the SDG targets are pursued in a systematic and effective manner. The roadmap was prepared on the basis of a wide-ranging consultative process led by the Ministry of Economy and Planning. The figure below summarizes the factors identified as key for the successful achievement of SDGs in Saudi Arabia. The figure also identified the three main components of Saudi Arabia’s SDG roadmap – policy development, monitoring and reporting, and the strategic enablers.

### 6 Key Success Factors to Achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda





# 3 Main Components of Saudi Arabia's SDG Roadmap



- Policy Development:** As highlighted in the previous sections of this report, Saudi Arabia has deployed an immense body of policies aimed at improving the living conditions of the Saudi people in a sustainable way. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 ensures the alignment of these national policies with the SDGs, with a focus on integrating the SDGs into national strategies and policies. The government has established the SDSC to oversee the implementation of the SDGs to ensure that all relevant agencies are working together towards the achievement of the SDGs.
- Monitoring and Reporting:** As demonstrated in the previous sections of this report, Saudi Arabia is taking steps to improve data collection and analysis, with a focus on monitoring progress towards the SDGs. The government has established the National Center for Performance Measurement (Adaa) as an independent government body to monitor performance processes across public entities and ensure that resources are being used effectively. As an integral component in monitoring and tracking the progress of Vision 2030, Adaa plays a key role in the tracking of the implementation of SDGs. Adaa publishes quarterly reports on the progress of strategic goals, initiatives, and KPIs, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the nation's advancement towards realizing the Vision 2030 objectives, and consequently achieving the SDGs. On the other hand, the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) is prioritizing capacity building for data collection, analysis, and interpretation in order to effectively monitor and review the implementation of SDGs. By focusing on the individual and organizational levels, GASTAT aims to strengthen the expertise of its staff in various indicators, research methods, and statistical techniques. This includes training highly skilled researchers who can transfer their knowledge of sustainable development to junior researchers. At the organizational level, GASTAT is working to enhance relevant organizations' abilities to analyze policies and procedures related to key SDG indicators, such as food security, education, and the environment. Through these efforts, GASTAT is committed to building a solid foundation for tracking and ensuring progress towards the SDGs.
- Strategic Enablers:** Saudi Arabia has identified four key strategic enablers that support the achievement of Saudi Arabia's SDG Roadmap. They are summarized in the figure below.









	Communication	Capacity building	Financing for Sustainable Development (FSD)	Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of campaigns and events</li> <li>Platforms to disseminate information</li> <li>Engage the public on sustainable development</li> <li>Showcase Saudi Arabia's efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and diffusion of accessible training on sustainable development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilization and effective use of various financing sources for sustainability purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging science, technology, and innovation (STI) to achieve SDGs</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness about sustainable development</li> <li>Promote sustainable behaviors across the general public and businesses</li> <li>Advocate for change to support implementation initiatives on sustainable development</li> <li>Unify communication strategies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop government employees' understanding and skills to engage sustainability</li> <li>Enhance International &amp; domestic knowledge sharing/collaboration</li> <li>Encourage improvement in private sector sustainability reporting</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate budgeting requirements of SDG into the national budget</li> <li>Direct existing investments to support sustainable development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower research efforts to identify innovative solutions to sustainability challenges</li> <li>Improve Saudi Arabia's contribution to the international literature on sustainability</li> <li>Inform SDG related policymaking</li> </ol>
<b>Thematic Drivers</b>				

The following is a brief summary of each enabler:

- Communication (and Stakeholder Engagement):** The government has closely engaged with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. The focus of the engagement has been on ensuring that the needs of all citizens are addressed, leaving no one behind. Saudi Arabia has established the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue to encourage dialogue between the government and civil society and is building strong partnerships with NGOs and other civil society organizations. In pursuit of the SDG goals, the government is working closely with international organizations. As shown in this report, the government has established partnerships with the United Nations to support sustainable development initiatives. Saudi Arabia has also engaged with other multilateral organizations, such as the GCC and the G20, to promote the sustainable development agenda.
- Capacity Building:** Saudi Arabia is investing significant amounts of resources in education and training, with a focus on developing the population's skills in alignment with the needs of the labor market. The government has established the National Transformation Program to build the capacity of the public sector and ensure it is equipped to support the implementation of the SDGs. Furthermore, the government has paid particular attention to strengthening the capacities and awareness of public sector organizations on the issue of sustainable development.
- Financing for Sustainable Development:** Saudi Arabia has established the Vision Realization Programs to support the implementation of the Vision 2030, which outlines key steps necessary for achieving the SDGs. The government has also conducted an assessment of the financing needs for the implementation of recommendations derived in the process of developing the SDG implementation roadmap. As highlighted throughout this report, the Saudi government has allocated and invested significant resources for the programs that further the sustainable development agenda in the country and globally. Initiatives such as the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) represent unprecedented investments in crucial sustainable development projects of importance not only to the Kingdom, but also to the whole world. Saudi Arabia has also deployed significant financial resources from the Saudi Public Investment Fund, one of the largest sovereign funds in the world, for projects that promote not only economic growth, but also sustainable development.

- **Science, Technology, and Innovation:** Saudi Arabia has also invested significantly in research and development, with a focus on developing new technologies that support sustainable development. As noted in previous sections of this report, the government has established a range of institutions, such as the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority, multiple incubators and accelerators, and so on, to support the development of technology and innovation.

The figure below summarizes specific prioritized interventions that Saudi Arabia has identified in each of the four above-mentioned areas that have the greatest potential to further progress in the achievement of SDGs.

Strategic Enabler	Proposed intervention	Thematic driver
<b>Communication</b> 	1- Develop a national awareness campaign to raise overall public awareness about the importance of SDGs 2- Organize events, conferences, and workshops in Saudi Arabia through dedicated SDG calendar 3- Spearhead national SDG centric competitions to increase engagement levels and encourage communities to play a leading role in addressing specific SDG challenges 4- Leverage social media to raise awareness of SDGs, disseminate knowledge, and provide evidence based achievements on Saudi Arabia's progress to achieving the SDGs 5- Develop a national SDG platform to create visibility and enhance engagement on Saudi Arabia's sustainability	
<b>Capacity Building</b> 	6- Develop localized online and face to face trainings to deliver capability for government employee, private sector and general population 7- Conduct targeted comprehensive institutional capacity building action for government institutions that will play a crucial role in SD ecosystem 8- Integrate sustainable development in curricula of education institutions 9- Leverage existing and engage new partnership to develop all types of capacity building interventions	
<b>Financing sustainable development</b> 	10- Create financial incentives to support sustainable practices and incorporate sustainability in existing fiscal framework 11- Create a dedicated working group for financing for sustainable development to drive innovations across sustainability driven financial products 12- Establish a targeted fund (under the national development fund) and enable issuance of innovative financial products sustainable development 13- Improve governance of Saudi Arabia's development cooperation to enhance focus sustainable development projects (e.g. through application of total official support for sustainable (TOSSD) framework)	
<b>Science, Technology and innovations (STI)</b> 	14- Promote STI knowledge sharing efforts 15- Develop dedicated center for STI effort that support sustainable development topics in collaborations with research institute, think -tanks and businesses 16- Enhance focus on leveraging advanced STI driven solutions for specific challenges for SDGs while using high correlation approach to maximize impact	

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Economy and Planning is in the process of establishing a platform that will enable all SDG stakeholders to regularly track progress in achieving of SDGs using clear metrics and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation process, adjusting as needed. The platform enables to track the status of implementation of all SDG-related recommendations that have been provided. Based on the platform, Saudi Arabia has secured the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and international partners to reach consensus and secure their commitment for the implementation of the SDGs. The platform is also being used to foster a culture of learning and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, including the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and experiences to enhance the implementation of the SDGs.

## Contributions and Voices of Civil Society

The Kingdom recognizes that the active participation of the non-profit sector is of great importance for successfully implementing the SDGs. As such, Saudi Arabia has bolstered the participation of civil society and other stakeholders in decision-making processes, including through measures to enhance public consultation and engagement. Vision 2030 has included several initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of civil society in sustainable development by creating an enabling environment and building their capacity to harness their capabilities, resources and expertise to serve these goals. The Kingdom also pays special attention to enhancing the participation of universities and academic and research institutions in this field.

### Contributions of Civil Society to the Achievement of SDGs

Civil society engagement is a vital aspect of life within Saudi Arabia, representing matters of special importance to its citizens. The Kingdom estimates there are over 2,500 non-profit organizations focusing on issues as diverse as alleviating poverty, improving education, healthcare, advocating for children's rights, or gender equality, etc. Together with academic institutions, their activities span across all Sustainable Development Goals. Numerous organizations exhibit tangible impact on achieving progress towards the sustainable development agenda, either by direct action, or by advocating for policy innovation and social change more broadly. This often requires effective collaboration between stakeholders as well as engaging all of society in constructive dialogue. The following are some examples of civil society contributions to the sustainable development agenda:

- **Saudi Housing NGOs** has formed a partnership with the Housing Program 2030, which is part of Vision 2030, to increase home ownership in the country to 70% by 2030 and provide 75,000 developmental housing units between 2021 and 2030. The program has already benefitted over 10,3 million followers, with a total payout exceeding SAR 116 billion since its inception.
- **Foundation for Future Female Leaders:** In 2022, the foundation launched the "Saudi Women Pioneers": Change from Within initiative which celebrated trailblazing women who broke barriers and championed gender equality, emphasizing merit-based opportunities for all.
- **Al Bir Society** promotes social solidarity and charitable work by providing financial aid, material assistance, and training courses to underprivileged individuals, while fostering self-sufficiency and participating in disaster relief efforts.
- **King Khalid Foundation** promotes economic development and equal opportunity in Saudi Arabia by funding social initiatives, capacity-building programs, and advocacy efforts, while collaborating with non-profits and institutions to empower them with tools and training. More in depth information about the King Khalid Information is provided in the case below.
- **Takatuf** is a Saudi organization that fosters community and teamwork by promoting volunteering, having engaged over 30,000 volunteers across various fields and industries according to its portal.
- **Takaful Charity Foundation** is responsible for supporting needy students in schools. It aims to continue a successful scientific achievement and transferring them from the circle of need into sufficiency and ease. Takaful served as the charitable arm of the Ministry of Education during the pandemic.
- **Abdulrehman Saleh Al Rajhi & Family Foundation**, or Al Rajhi Charity, is a prominent NGO dedicated to promoting community service, volunteerism, and non-profit sector development through strategic partnerships and unique programs. With a focus on values such as fairness, humility, and excellence, the foundation supports various projects and programs aligned with the SDGs, while fostering volunteerism, capacity-building, and collaboration within the non-profit sector.
- **Al-Oula**, a Jeddah-based NGO, aims to break the poverty cycle by fostering the positive development of children through education, professional, and physical skills enhancement, with a focus on development, education, family, skills development, and women's empowerment.







# CIVIL SOCIETY

## KING KHALID FOUNDATION

### IN-DEPTH CASE

#### SUMMARY

King Khalid Foundation invests in people, organizations and policies working to promote equality and create opportunity in Saudi Arabia. Through funding, capacity building and advocacy, it focuses on supporting inclusive social and economic development, for the benefit of all Saudi residents.

 <p><b>Social Investment</b> In people and organizations working to promote equality and create opportunity</p>	 <p><b>Capacity Building</b> To empower nonprofits and companies to deliver sustainable social and economic change</p>	 <p><b>Policy Design and Advocacy</b> To address inequality, promote prosperity and strengthen Saudi society</p>	 <p><b>King Khalid Award</b> As a platform for celebrating and accelerating social change, rewarding exceptional achievements</p>
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#### IMPACT

<p><b>Millions of riyals</b> awarded in grant and award money</p>	<p>A total of <b>SAR 3,8 million</b> given to 999 beneficiaries of 15 equal opportunities grants program in 2019</p>	<p><b>52,400 iftar meals</b> were distributed in 2019</p>
<p>The foundation helped to influence decision maker such as the council of minister who passed <b>the woman and child abuse prevention Law</b> in 2013</p>	<p>Since its establishment. The foundation has development and implemented a number of social and economic development and research projects</p>	<p><b>106 participants</b> from 17 different NPOs across the country participated in 4 workshops ranging from project development, monitoring &amp; evaluation to impact assessment, corporate communication, fundraising development, and NPO executive leadership.</p>

#### NEXT STEPS

<p>The Muhammad Bin Salman foundation (MiSK) and King Khalid foundation have signed a memorandum of understanding with the aim supporting youth non-profit organizations, boosting their Social impact and enhancing their contributions to realizing the comprehensive national development program, according to the Saudi Vision 2030</p>	<p>The foundation announced plans to assist Saudi Arabia in boosting nonprofit sector's contribution to GDP by 5% by 2030</p>
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Saudi universities are playing a crucial role in the achievement of the SDGs through various initiatives, research centers, and educational programs. The following are some examples of contributions by Saudi universities:

- **King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST):** In May 2022, KAUST launched the #HereToLead campaign to promote gender equality and women's advancement in STEM fields by raising awareness and highlighting successful Saudi women at the institution, with the involvement of KAUST volunteers and students. KAUST has also established research programs focused on sustainable ocean management, and the country actively collaborates with international partners to exchange best practices.
- **King Salman Center for Education for Employment (KSCEE):** Established by the Prince Sultan University, the center focuses on equipping young people with essential skills and knowledge to improve their employment prospects. It offers vocational training, language classes, and job placement assistance to help build a prosperous and stable society.
- **King Salman Center for Local Governance (CLG):** Affiliated with Prince Sultan University, the CLG conducts research, offers advisory services, and designs specialized management training courses in local governance. It also runs the King Salman Award for Local Governance in the Arab World and hosts special projects such as the Saudi Government Digital Map.
- **Red Sea Research Center:** This center, established under KAUST, is dedicated to studying and promoting sustainable ocean management in the Red Sea region.
- **Fisheries Research Center and Faculty of Marine Science:** These centers, located at King Faisal University and King Abdulaziz University, respectively, focus on research and education in marine sciences and sustainable fisheries management.

A more in-depth summary of the role of Saudi universities in the country's SDG agenda is provided in the following page.

Saudi Arabia's youth are actively engaged in the SDGs through various initiatives, programs, and organizations that empower them, build their skills, and provide platforms for sustainable development and positive change. Vision 2030 includes several initiatives aimed at empowering and engaging young people. Programs launched by the Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority (Monsha'at) help talented youth showcase their ideas and products. The following are examples of youth groups that have engaged with the SDG agenda:

- **Saudi Youth for Sustainability (SYS):** This youth-led national organization seeks to empower and connect young leaders to drive positive changes towards a sustainable future. It creates student sustainability groups at Saudi universities, promotes networking among change-makers, fosters knowledge sharing, and advances best practices in youth sustainability initiatives.
- **Arab Youth Sustainable Development Network (AYSDN):** Comprising youth professionals and experts from the MENA region, this network addresses the lack of youth participation in achieving sustainable development. It provides consultancy, research, and strategic plans, conducts workshops and conferences, and promotes youth initiatives related to sustainable development.
- **Al-Ahsa Volunteering Team:** A youth-led initiative that aims to implement the 17 SDGs in Saudi Arabia, starting with the city of Al-Ahsa. It envisions 17 teams working together under one umbrella, engaging the community and media, introducing new programs, and organizing monthly meetings and trainings.
- **Youth Leadership program Saudi Arabia:** This program offers training in the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality, and social innovation. It has successfully completed five cycles and worked with over 20,000 youth participants by the end of 2019.

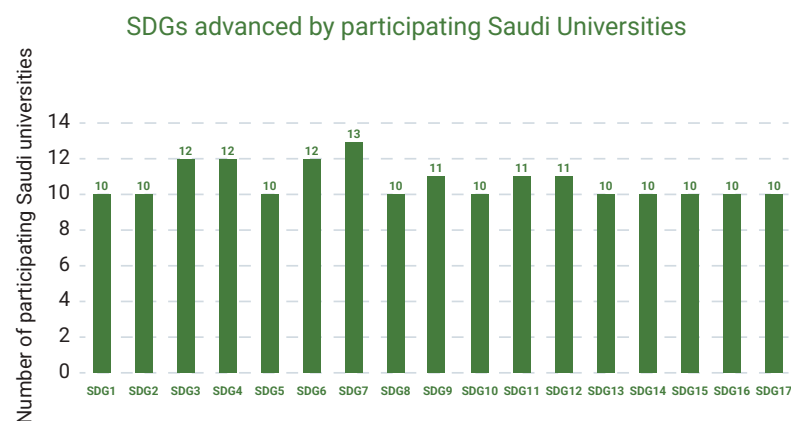
# CIVIL SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF SAUDI UNIVERSITIES IN ADVANCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND VISION 2030

## IN-DEPTH CASE

### SUMMARY

The two most recent UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks have helped in the identification of recurrent patterns and challenges preventing Saudi Arabia's overall progress on the 2030 agenda. They identify issues with data availability that remain a critical obstacle as institutions of higher education, universities respond to challenges faced and visibly contribute to the Kingdom's ambitions to progress on the 2030 agenda and the goals of Vision 2030. Also by leading SDG -adjacent direct interventions.

According to recent data collected from 10 of the 16 participating Saudi universities, 33 university initiatives are currently aimed towards the advancement of the SDGs



### IMPACT

All 16 universities surveyed are involved in research in multiple areas:

**The Islamic University of Al-Madinah** conducts research on the techniques, frameworks, and applications of “smart city” technology that helps scale up the quality of life of residents and visitors of Al-Madinah. In particular, they focus on issues relating to water conservation and waste management, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

**Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University's** Woman leadership program (QIADYH) aims to increase the proportion of Saudi women in leadership positions and to enhance their leadership capacities with a 5 months long evaluated training program covering topics from team building to negotiation skills the program also curates a professional support network.

**Jeddah University**, which is particularly oriented at multi discipliner studies, focuses on the themes of suitability, logistics, environment, and health and wellbeing.

**King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology** is the Kingdom's main and central national lab for R&D and innovation. It acts as carrier arm to all universities and research centers sharing access to its lab, on top of serving KACST's own researchers.

**King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)** is one of the leading research and innovation institutions in the region, with a strong focus on interdisciplinary research and collaboration in fields like energy, water and the environment. It boosts state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure including labs, supercomputing resources, and a range of research centers and institutes.

### NEXT STEPS

Numerous partnerships were developed in the process, including those with the open Arab university, the commission of social development. Aljazeera bank, and the ministry of Social Affairs. As new partnership emerge, the universities are to face multiple challenges, ie. with addressing areas less frequently researched and acted upon, such as those related to the No Poverty goal.

Another aspect of civil society engagement with the SDGs is volunteering – a vital tool for sustainable development in Saudi Arabia, with many non-profit organizations and groups working towards critical issues such as health, education, and disaster risk reduction, among others. The government's commitment to increasing the number of volunteers to 600,000 and establishing various incentives and initiatives highlights the importance of active citizen engagement and the role of civil society in achieving sustainable development (see more details in the box below).

### Volunteerism as an Instrument of Sustainable Development

Volunteering has long been a cornerstone of Saudi society, with about 1,000 non-profit organizations and groups in the country. The Kingdom has specific legislation on volunteering, and the government is committed to increasing the number of volunteers to 600,000. Many volunteers work on critical issues such as health, youth and sports, disaster risk reduction, and education, among others. Vision 2030 notes the importance of active citizen engagement and the role of civil society. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development is responsible for institutionalizing social aid and volunteering. In 2020, the country developed a Voluntary Service Law aimed at regulating and developing voluntary service and promoting patriotism, humanitarian work, and social responsibility in the community. The government has also established an initiative for volunteer work, volunteer management departments in non-profit organizations, and a National Volunteers portal to provide volunteer opportunities and monitor and document volunteering hours. The goal is to promote civic engagement and participation, enhance social capital, and contribute to the country's economic and social growth. Volunteer work in Saudi Arabia is diverse and carried out by non-government organizations, including youth groups and religious organizations, as well as individual citizens and private sector companies. Types of volunteering opportunities include environmental conservation, community service, and support for individuals with special needs. Several non-profit organizations, including Takatuf, the Abdulrehman Saleh Al Rajhi & Family Foundation, and Al-Oula, have played an important role in promoting volunteerism and supporting the non-profit sector. In 2022, the Saudi Red Crescent Authority counted 6,176 volunteers, with more women than men, who participated in more than 1,800 events on various issues such as disaster risk reduction, health, and migration.

These examples showcase the significant and diverse contributions of civil society organizations, including universities and youth groups, in promoting sustainable development and achieving the SDGs in Saudi Arabia.

### Voices of Civil Society

The Saudi government expresses gratitude for the valuable support and collaboration of civil society organizations (CSOs) in attaining the SDGs. To foster greater inclusivity in the VNR process, MEP launched an online survey for interested CSOs from diverse sectors to articulate their perspectives on the country's foremost challenges and the necessary measures to tackle them. The following is a summary of the inputs received from civil society representatives, reflecting their collective voice:

- CSOs have actively engaged in various SDG-related activities. This includes forming the first youth SDG club in the country, focusing on engagement and awareness. CSOs have also established community welfare centers, such as the Family Counseling Center, and implemented programs targeting poverty reduction.
- CSOs reported contributions to the country's SDG implementation process. These include the establishment of the first Carbon Neutral® certified university in the MENA region, initiatives focused on early detection and treatment of language disorders in children, the creation of the Princess Noura bint Abdul Rahman Award for Excellence to support and empower women, and active participation in Recycling Day events and SGI summits.
- Participating CSOs expressed a strong interest in becoming more involved with the SDG process. These organizations span various sectors, including health, environment, sustainability, energy, and education. Their aims include leading the SDG agenda for the education sector, contributing to capacity building and implementation, focusing on quality education, promoting SDGs for an improved quality of life, leading the circular economy, etc.



- There is consensus among participating CSOs that progress is being made in securing meaningful and active participation in SDG national-level actions. They highlighted successful collaborations and joint projects with public and private entities. However, some respondents emphasized the need for ongoing consultation with stakeholders across all phases of the SDG progress and suggest that there could be more involvement to build on existing efforts by organizations already working towards fulfilling the SDGs.
- To enhance the involvement of civil society and academic organizations in the SDG process, respondents emphasized fostering collaboration with stakeholders at local, regional, and global levels, encouraging policy dialogues and engagement initiatives. Increasing awareness and actively involving CSOs in the process was seen as important. Additionally, they suggested developing user-friendly frameworks for academic organizations, incorporating SDGs into educational curricula, and undertaking a comprehensive review to assess the progress made by public and private entities in advancing the Kingdom's position regarding the SDGs.
- CSOs suggested that the main focus of the country's efforts towards achieving the SDGs should include improving areas with the largest room for improvement, such as SDGs 3, 4, 11, and 13. They proposed establishing a national hub for sharing best practices and promoting regular discussions, policy dialogues, and engagement initiatives, involving more stakeholders and focusing on goals related to youth, who constitute a significant portion of society. Additionally, CSOs highlighted the Kingdom's strengths in clean energy and climate action, suggesting a focus on leveraging these strengths through energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
- According to CSOs surveyed, some of the significant challenges include improving the quality of life for lower- and middle-class families. The education sector requires increased collaboration and financial support from relevant ministries to achieve SDG goals. Respondents also highlighted the lack of information and late discovery of language difficulties in children, leading to poor outcomes. Additionally, they emphasized the need to disseminate SDG awareness widely and address the fragmentation of efforts. For example, the Saudi Green Initiative was mentioned as one of the main comprehensive pillars towards achieving several SDGs for the Kingdom.
- CSOs proposed solutions such as implementing more programs targeting productive families and fostering collaboration between private and public sectors, with a focus on engaging youth. They suggested implementing screening programs for early detection of language disorders in children and enrolling them in intervention programs. Additionally, they recommended developing a curriculum structure aligned with the SDGs and allocating research activities to societal problem-solving. CSOs called for increased public awareness, with a clear workflow and incentives to consolidate efforts and enhance the kingdom's performance in achieving the SDGs.

Overall, despite the low response rate, the survey demonstrated that Saudi CSOs have been actively involved in SDG-related activities, contributed to the country's implementation process, and expressed a strong interest in further engagement. They believe progress is being made in securing meaningful participation, but some emphasize the need for ongoing consultation and deeper involvement. Recommendations to improve engagement include sharing SDG measures, fostering collaboration, encouraging policy dialogue, and integrating SDGs into educational curricula. CSOs suggest focusing on goals related to youth, clean energy, and climate action, while addressing challenges like poverty, education, and fragmented efforts. Proposed solutions include increased collaboration, awareness-raising, early intervention programs, and aligning curricula with SDG goals.

## Contributions and Voices of the Private Sector

While governments are primarily responsible for formulating policies and executing measures to advance SDG progress, the active involvement of the business sector is vital. The engagement of the Saudi Arabian business community is particularly important given its significant impact on key areas such as economic growth, environmental protection, job creation, energy, and standard of living. Without the direct participation of private sector companies, progress in these areas will not be possible. Moreover, it is widely recognized that for a business to achieve long-term success, it must attend to its environmental and social impacts and cultivate sustainable business principles. In this regard, the SDGs present a unique opportunity for Saudi businesses to contribute to sustainable development, which will ultimately benefit both society and businesses in the medium and long term.

### Contributions of the Private Sector to the Achievement of SDGs

Saudi companies have provided significant contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. These contributions have promoted sustainable practices across sectors, including environmental protection, climate change mitigation, housing, health, and education. Companies have taken proactive steps to reduce emissions, invest in renewable energy, implement sustainability practices, and support initiatives that protect biodiversity. Furthermore, public-private partnerships have been leveraged to promote sustainable housing development and improve health and education outcomes. Some companies have developed comprehensive sustainability plans; for example, SABIC has developed a Sustainability Roadmap aligned with the SDGs that targets resource efficiency, climate change, circular economy, food security, sustainable infrastructure, and environmental preservation. As part of its 2025 strategy, SABIC identified 10 areas with 20 impact opportunities to create a holistic approach, focusing on sustainable feedstock sourcing, energy-efficient operations, innovative product and process development, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaborations to contribute to SDG targets and business growth. Overall, these collective efforts by the private sector are essential for accelerating progress towards the SDGs and ensuring a sustainable future for all. The following are some examples of these contributions:

#### Environmental protection and climate change:

- 15 Saudi companies, including Aramco, SABIC, Olayan Financing Company, and Ma'aden, have shown commitment to carbon emission reduction by participating in an auction for CORSIA-compliant and Verra-registered carbon credits.
- Major companies like SABIC, Aramco, and Ma'aden have developed comprehensive corporate sustainability plans to reduce waste, increase efficiency, and promote sustainability. They have set ambitious targets for emission reductions and carbon neutrality by 2050.
- SABIC, committed to the Paris Agreement goals, aims for carbon neutrality by 2050 and a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2018 levels. By 2022, they achieved an 8.2% absolute emission reduction and plan to collaborate with partners on initiatives to reduce indirect emissions along the value chain
- Ma'aden has launched the Afforestation Initiative that aims to plant 20 million trees by 2040, and invest in carbon capturing and utilization technologies.
- The NEOM Green Hydrogen Company is working to produce up to 600 tons of carbon-free hydrogen daily in the form of green ammonia by 2026. This initiative is the world's largest utility-scale, commercially-based hydrogen facility powered entirely by renewable energy.
- SEC has collaborated with KAUST to deploy Cryogenic CO<sub>2</sub> Capture Technology at Green Duba PP and Rabig PP
- Saudi Electricity Company has established a Green Sukuk Framework with the aim of facilitating transition to a low-emission economy and circular economy. SEC's first international Green Sukuks were issued in 2020, the first for a Saudi company within the Kingdom.

### Renewable energy and water management:

- ACWA Power, which specializes in the development, investment in, and operation of power generation and desalinated water production plants, has become a prominent player in Saudi Arabia's shift towards a greener and more responsible energy mix.
- SABIC, committed to sourcing renewable energy for its operations, plans to procure up to 4 GW of renewable energy within the next three years, including 3.5 GW from solar, wind, hydroelectric, and biomass installations in Saudi Arabia.
- ENOWA, in collaboration with ITOCHU and Veolia, is developing a cutting-edge desalination plant powered by 100% renewable energy in Oxagon, NEOM's advanced manufacturing and innovation city. The plant aims to achieve 100% zero liquid discharge in downstream brine industries.

### Hydrogen production and infrastructure:

- The Saudi private sector is supporting the Kingdom in becoming a leading hydrogen producer and exporter by 2030, with several projects already underway, including the NEOM green hydrogen project. As announced at the launch of the Saudi Green Initiative conference in Sharm Elsheikh, 50-kmt of blue ammonia has been shipped from Saudi Arabia to South Korea, representing a new milestone in the development of de-carbonization solutions.
- Aramco, SABIC, and Ma'aden have obtained the world's first independent certifications recognizing "blue" hydrogen and ammonia production.
- Companies like NEOM, Saudi Ground Services Company, Royal Commission of Jubail and Yanbu, and Air Products are building hydrogen fueling stations and launching pilot projects for hydrogen fuel cell-based vehicles and transportation applications.

**NEOM Green Hydrogen Company - Pioneering Sustainable Energy**

The GFIC aims to:

- Produce carbon-free hydrogen for global transportation.
- Produce 600 tons of green ammonia daily by 2026.
- Utilize 4 GW of renewable power, including solar, wind and storage.

Technologies:	Production:	Carbon mitigation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ThyssenKrupp</li><li>• Air Products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean hydrogen, nitrogen and 1.2 million tons of green ammonia yearly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 million metric tons of emissions annually</li></ul>

### Carbon capture and reuse:

- Large-scale CCUS projects are operating in Saudi Arabia, with Aramco's Uthmaniyah and Hawiyah NGL facilities reusing carbon for enhanced oil recovery (EOR). SABIC built the world's largest carbon purification and liquefaction plant with 500 KTA capture capacity, for converting carbon into valuable chemicals such as urea, methanol and applications in the food and beverage industry. liquefaction plant with 500 KTA capture capacity, for converting carbon into valuable chemicals such as urea, methanol, and applications in the food and beverage industry.

### Wastewater treatment and conservation:

- Private sector investments have been made in the Madinah-3 wastewater treatment plant, which will ultimately have the capacity to treat 375,000 m<sup>3</sup> of urban water.
- Companies are working on developing sustainable desalination and water treatment capabilities, including solar-powered water treatment plants, through collaborations between Taqnia Energy and KACST.

### Marine biodiversity conservation:

- The Red Sea Development Company (TRSDC), in partnership with King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), is conserving and maintaining the pristine marine biodiversity along the Kingdom's Red Sea coast, laying the foundation for a sustainable tourism destination.

### Sustainable housing:

- The government is fostering public-private partnerships to promote sustainable housing development and encourage private sector investment in energy-efficient and environmentally friendly housing projects.
- SABIC's Home of Innovation is highly energy- and water- efficient and is the first single-family home in the Middle East to achieve the platinum evaluation of the LEED-Platinum® Energy and Environmental Design Leadership System accredited by the American Green™ Building Council.

### Health and nutrition:

- The Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA) launched the Strategy for Healthy Food and secured voluntary commitment agreements from major food companies like Nestlé, Mars, PepsiCo, and Kellogg's to reduce sugar, salt, and saturated/transformed fats in products.

### Education and digital transformation:

- The Future Gate initiative, implemented by Tatweer Educational Technologies (TETCO), is transforming classrooms and education management systems in Saudi Arabia by introducing smart classrooms and digital education management systems.
- The Ministry of Education's partnership with Microsoft for the Madrasati platform has helped reduce digital illiteracy and has integrated distance learning into the educational plan, making Saudi Arabia the first Arab country to excel in e-learning.

## Government and Non-Government Action in Support of Private Sector Sustainability

Saudi Arabia recognizes the importance of the private sector in sustainable development. Vision 2030 envisions increasing the share of the private sector contribution to GDP from 40% to 65% by 2030. Given this growing role in the Kingdom's future development, the private sector will play an instrumental role in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Saudi government has put in place a comprehensive framework to promote sustainability in the corporate sector. This framework comprises incentive schemes, financing tools, frameworks and standards, rating systems, multi-stakeholder involvement, public-private

partnerships, special purpose vehicles, roundtables, awards, competitions, awareness campaigns, and capability-building initiatives. Annex I of this report lists some examples of incentivizing instruments put in place by the Saudi government. This framework demonstrates the Saudi government's commitment to promoting sustainability within the business community and industries. By offering various incentives, tools, partnerships, and programs, the government is fostering a culture of sustainability and supporting companies as they work to meet environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals.

Nevertheless, there are still challenges that hinder the wider adoption of sustainability by companies. They include limited sustainability disclosures, little coordination among stakeholders, an uncoordinated set of policies and incentives, and low awareness among businesses, investors, and the public. Addressing these issues will not only help improve corporate sustainability but also support the achievement of the Vision 2030 and SDGs. To address these challenges, the Kingdom has initiated a national effort to develop a comprehensive Corporate Sustainability Strategy led by MEP with key government and corporate partners. This strategy, which is still under development, will outline the Kingdom's ambitions, vision, and measurable outcomes, while also identifying necessary programs and initiatives to support and incentivize businesses in adopting sustainable practices. The interventions launched by government entities relevant to corporate sustainability have been mapped across four different categories according to the degree of government involvement.



## Voices of the Private Sector

To promote greater inclusiveness in the VNR process, private sector companies were invited to participate in an online survey launched by MEP through which private-sector companies shared their perspectives and contributions towards sustainable development. Based on survey data, the table below highlights the varying levels of collaboration among private sector companies on partnerships to address the SDGs with various organizations. The strongest collaborations are observed with Saudi public institutions and not-for-profit/non-governmental organizations, reflecting a higher degree of active engagement. Meanwhile, cooperation under the UN Global Compact reveals more restrained collaboration, suggesting room for further improvement.

### Private Sector Survey

What kind of support would enhance your company's impact on the SDGs? Please select all that apply to your business/organization.

Statement	No. of responses
Mapping of SDGs with my company's internal priorities	22
Using the SDGs to identify risks and opportunities for my company	23
Engaging suppliers to also identify and work towards relevant SDGs	23
Educating customers on sustainability and the SOGs	19
Creating a long-term company strategy and goals aligned to the SDGS	21
Communicating our efforts	14
Strengthening company's senior management commitment	15
Engaging company 'board of directors on the SDGS	18

The table below presents key business drivers for private sector companies to embrace and advance the (SDGs). Both "sustainability actions being valued by customers" and "SDGs aligning with core business principles and values" received the highest number of responses (29). Other significant drivers include increased brand value (26), competitive advantage (23), and using SDGs strategically to identify risks and opportunities (20).

## Private Sector Survey

Please identify the key business drivers for your business/organization to embrace and advance the SDGs. Please select all that are relevant to your business/organization.

Statement	No. of responses
Sustainability actions are valued by our customers	29
Sustainability actions are valued by our suppliers	20
The SDGs are important to my business/organization and align with its core business	
Principles and values	29
The SDGS represent a competitive advantage for my business/organization	23
Implementing the SDGS increases the brand value for my business/organization	26
We use the 5065 strategically to identify risks and opportunities	20

The table below outlines the types of support that will enhance companies' impact on SDGs. Top responses include using SDGs to identify risks and opportunities (23), and engaging suppliers to work towards relevant SDGs (23). Companies also expressed interest in mapping SDGs with internal priorities (22), creating long-term strategies aligned with SDGs (21), and educating customers on sustainability (19). Lower-priority support includes engaging the board of directors (18), strengthening senior management commitment (15), and communicating efforts (14).

### Private Sector Survey

To what extent does your company collaborate on partnerships to address the SDGs with the following organizations?

Organization	Actively engaged	To some degree	Would like to	Not at all
Cooperation with Saudi public institutions	20	12	7	3
Cooperation with Saudi not-for-profit and/or nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions	19	12	8	3
Cooperation with Saudi industry associations	13	13	10	4
Cooperation with international organizations	15	4	13	9
Cooperation under the UN Global Compact	14	4	8	11

The following is a summary of the input received from companies, reflecting their collective voice:

- Over the past four years, Saudi Arabia's private sector companies have actively engaged in diverse corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, addressing social and environmental issues across various sectors. These initiatives include environmental and sustainability efforts, COVID-19 response, education and training, community engagement and well-being, Hajj season support, women's empowerment and inclusion, environmental preservation, and social initiatives. Companies have forged numerous public-private partnerships with organizations such as the Royal Commission, UNGC, NCEC, Mawhiba, Sipchem, the Ministry of Health, GPCA, academic universities, and the National Royal Reserve.
- Despite their efforts, these companies face challenges in advancing action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including low awareness among stakeholders, challenging targets, financial constraints, insufficient infrastructure, unclear indicators, and inertia in certain business sectors. To enhance their impact on the SDGs, the surveyed private-sector representatives suggested regulatory direction, capacity development, SMART SDG targets, and partnerships with local and regional associations focused on SDGs.
- Participating companies believe that Saudi Arabia's main focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda should include establishing a mechanism to measure SDG impact, providing regulatory guidance, raising awareness in the public and private sector, and attracting experts. They also suggest concentrating on key areas such as zero hunger, good health, industry, innovation, infrastructure, and quality education, as well as enhancing communication about the synergy between the SDGs and Saudi Vision 2030.
- The companies recommend executing Saudi Vision 2030's objectives, realizing the Saudi Green Initiative targets, and implementing the Saudi Renewable Energy National Program. This would involve incentivizing businesses to advance efforts on SDG implementation, rewarding companies that invest in SDGs, and encouraging private-sector, non-profit, and public engagement. Furthermore, they emphasize promoting gender equality, sustainable cities, sustainable tourism, innovations, circular economy, and renewable energy, while implementing regulations and subsidies for committed organizations.

**Overall**, the survey demonstrated that Saudi companies are actively engaged in addressing global challenges and advancing the SDGs. Through diverse corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, private companies have contributed to environmental sustainability, COVID-19 response, education and training, community engagement, Hajj support, women's empowerment, environmental preservation, and various social initiatives. Public-private partnerships have played a crucial role in facilitating these efforts. However, challenges remain, including low awareness, financial constraints, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of regulatory guidance. To enhance their impact on the SDGs, companies have suggested clearer regulatory direction, capacity development, partnerships, and increased knowledge exchange. Focusing on key areas such as zero hunger, good health, industry, innovation, infrastructure, and quality education, Saudi Arabia's efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda will require enhanced cooperation between private businesses, non-profits, and public organizations.

## Conclusion and Efforts Going Forward

This report has demonstrated the significant progress Saudi Arabia has made in the achievement of SDGs. This progress is evidenced by the improvement of SDG indicators and the multitude of programs and initiatives that have been put in place in support of sustainable development. This report has demonstrated that the achievements are the focus of Vision 2030, which provides a comprehensive and integrated strategy for economic and social development in the Kingdom. As demonstrated throughout this report, the Kingdom is pursuing the achievement of Vision 2030 and SDG targets simultaneously and in a complementary fashion.

Overall, the emerging picture is one of success. This VNR report has demonstrated that Saudi Arabia has established an extensive ecosystem of institutions and working groups responsible for policy development, data and reporting, and strategic enabler. These bodies are, working together to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the SDGs. Furthermore, the analysis of SDG indicators presented in this report demonstrates in quantitative terms that Saudi Arabia has made significant progress across all social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the SDGs. Even in areas where there has been stagnation in terms of SDG indicators (like Life on Land or Life Below Water), the Kingdom has recently launched major initiatives like the Saudi Green Initiative that address challenges in a comprehensive and integrated fashion.

This VNR report provides a summary of major achievements across sectors. In the social sphere, the welfare system has been modernized, making it more efficient and equitable. The overhauled social security system now provides a better safety net for people in need, particularly low-income families. It provides vulnerable individuals and families with tailored assistance. The Housing Program encourages home ownership. Multiple government programs have been put in place to incentivize employment and entrepreneurship, especially for women and youth. People with disabilities are able to obtain education and jobs for a productive and fulfilling life. Saudi Arabia has also made significant progress in promoting the rights of women's, with the government initiating a range of initiatives that facilitate women's participation in the labor force, entrepreneurship, and decision-making. Saudi Arabia's commitment and support for those most in need goes beyond its borders. The Kingdom has made substantial contributions to international aid organizations and has established partnerships with other nations to address global challenges, such as hunger, disease, and displacement.

The government has prioritized human development increased public investment in education has resulted in greater access to early childhood education, improved quality of primary and secondary education and better opportunities for university education and professional training. Increased partnerships by Saudi educational institutions with world-class universities have improved the quality of education. The Kingdom has made progress through programs such as "Quality of Life" which have invested substantial resources, especially for those most vulnerable.

Public investments in the health sector have improved the efficiency, capacity and coverage of our healthcare system. Measures such as the construction of new hospitals and clinics, as well as the upgrading of existing facilities, have improved access to healthcare services, especially in rural and remote communities. Furthermore, by incentivizing the adoption of technology and innovations, such as electronic health records, telemedicine services, and the use of artificial intelligence and robotics, the government has improved the reach and efficiency of service delivery. Saudi Arabia now enjoys an increased number of trained healthcare professionals thanks to improved healthcare education and training programs. The prioritization of preventive care and the increased use of primary care as a first stop in the healthcare system has improved the efficiency of the healthcare system, leading to tangible improvements in child and maternal health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases. The government is paying attention to emerging conditions such as diabetes and heart diseases and is promoting healthy lifestyles and preventative measures. This VNR report has also documented the way in which Saudi Arabia responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. By undertaking swift and decisive action to protect the health and well-being of its citizens and residents, the Saudi government was able to reopen the economy while maintaining necessary health and safety measures. Despite the significant impact, the Kingdom managed the crisis effectively as a result of concerted efforts in the health, social and economic spheres.



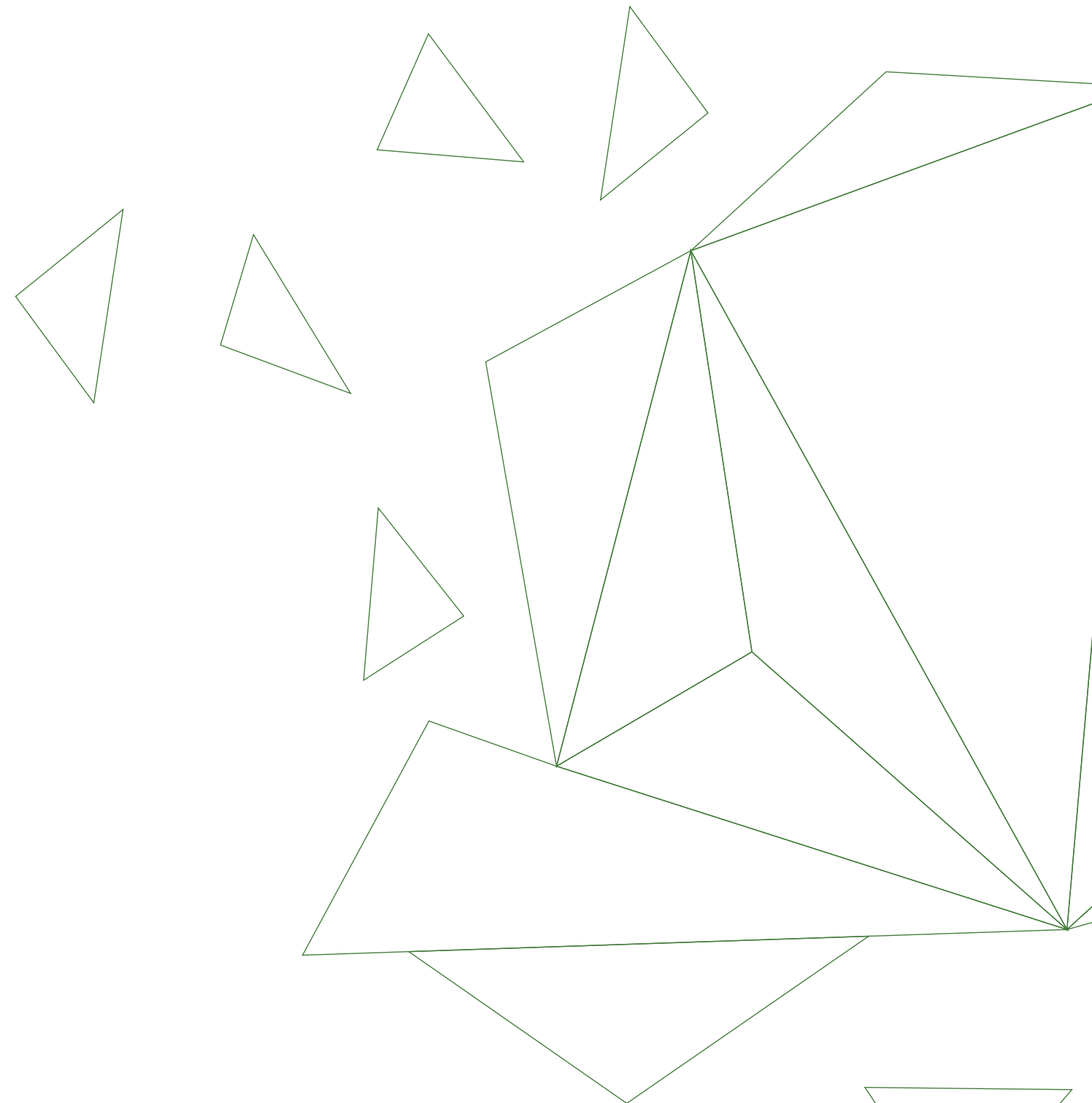
Saudi Arabia greatly values environmental protection and natural resource preservation. The flagship Saudi Green Initiative contributes in a significant way to the global effort to address climate change. The ambitious initiatives being launched under this initiative include implementing comprehensive energy efficiency programs, making significant investments in clean hydrogen and renewable energy sources, and developing cutting-edge carbon capture technology. Several nature reserves and national parks have created safer habitats for native species and opportunities for eco-tourism. Additionally, several innovative initiatives waste management and significant investments in advanced technologies have reduced the environmental impact of waste disposal and helped to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions the Kingdom has also played a major role in multilateral institutions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

Through dedicated effort, the Saudi economy has become more diversified, competitive and resilient. Economic activity is intensifying in several sectors such as tourism, technology, and diversified energy. The government has stimulated SME entrepreneurship, which combined with privatization and investments in new industries and improvements in the business environment, has increased job opportunities, especially for the younger generation. The accelerated privatization of state-owned enterprises has boosted the efficiency of infrastructure and is attracting private investment. The modernization of the transportation infrastructure and the building of new housing have led to tangible improvements in quality of life. The ambitious labor market reforms have increased the participation of women and young people in the workforce. The reforms in the financial sector have opened it to international finance and foreign capital.

This report has also outlined Saudi Arabia's role in promoting sustainable development regionally and globally. During its presidency of the G20 in 2020, the Kingdom promoted sustainable development and environmental protection globally. The Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency focused on maintaining global attention on sustainable development, while simultaneously addressing the COVID-19 challenges. A direct result of Saudi Arabia's leadership in the G20 was the adoption of the Circular Carbon Economy approach by G20 countries as an integrated and comprehensive framework to address GHG emissions. Furthermore, by spearheading the Middle East Green Initiative and its commitment to invest significantly in renewable energy and other environmental protection measures in the regional context demonstrate how Saudi Arabia is substantially furthering climate action beyond its own borders.

While progress in implementing the SDGs has been considerable, one consistent finding of this VNR across most sectors is that there is a need for more and higher-quality data, which is a crucial aspect of achieving the SDGs. Having recognized this need, the government is taking measures to improve data collection and analysis, with a focus on monitoring progress towards the SDGs. The National Center for Performance Measurement represents a major step in this direction. The government's commitment to investing in research and development, particularly in the field of science, technology, and innovation, will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing the quality of data for the SDGs. Additionally, the platform being put in place by the Ministry of Economy and Planning to enable stakeholders to track progress in achieving the SDGs using clear metrics is a valuable tool that will foster learning and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.

The next seven years will be crucial in shaping the future of the Kingdom and determining the extent and speed at which the aspirations of Vision 2030 and the SDG agenda will be realized. Moving forward, the Saudi government will continue to adapt and evolve its approach to ensure the successful implementation of Vision 2030 and SDGs. This will be grounded in intensive efforts to achieve economic diversification and job creation, while balancing the need to maintain social stability and address environmental concerns. These efforts will be illustrated in Saudi Arabia's upcoming VNRs. The Saudi government aims at preparing a total of four VNRs by 2030. The upcoming two VNRs, envisaged for 2025/26 and 2030, will document the Kingdom's continued progress.



# ANNEX I





# Framework for the Promotion of Sustainability in the Corporate Sector

## Incentive schemes

- **Incentives through the National Renewable Energy Program (Ministry of Energy):** Providing industrial sites, stable interest rates, and long-term financing options for renewable energy projects targeting the private sector
- **Employment Support Program (MHRSD):** Providing subsidized payroll for Saudi job seekers by 30-50% with a special focus on women, disabled candidates and those employed in SMEs and rural areas to drive national employment
- **Qurrah (MHRSD):** Encouraging mothers to join the workforce by subsidizing childcare by SAR 400-800 per month per child driving more diversity in the workforce.
- **Wusool (MHRSD):** Subsidizing up to 80% of transportation costs for women, encouraging more women to join the workforce.
- **Supplemental Payroll Subsidies (MHRSD):** Subsidizing payroll commitments of companies who have a high volume of local employees to encourage local hiring in the private sector. Companies can register 15-20% of their Saudi employees for subsidies.
- **Mutajadedda (SIDF):** Providing financing for renewable energy projects in the private sector with financing given up to 75% of project costs.
- **Tanafusiya (SIDF):** Providing financial aid to support industrial corporates improve energy performance, and reduce consumption within the industrial sector.
- **Incentives through the National Industrial Center (National Industrial Center):** Tax exemptions including personal income, sales, and land and property tax relating to renewable energy projects as well as providing low-cost industrial sites, exemption from export duties and facilitation for labor requirements, all relating to renewable energy projects for companies.
- **Sustainable Agriculture Rural Development Program (MEWA):** Providing financial support for the development of sustainable agriculture activities in specific sectors such as fruit production and beekeeping.

## Financing tools

- **Public Investment Fund (PIF)/Green Finance Framework (PIF):** A framework developed by the Public Investment Fund to classify green projects and issue various types of green financing instruments including green bonds, Sukuk and loans to encourage the development of green projects. PIF has committed to investing over \$10 billion by 2026.

## Frameworks and standards

- **National Sustainability Standards (Ministry of Commerce):** A set of voluntary sustainability standards to help companies disclose their sustainability practices.
- **Tadawul ESG Guidelines (Tadawul):** Guidelines on ESG reporting options with an emphasis on ESG themes with local priority and key issues to incorporate in sustainability reports for all listed companies in the Saudi exchange.
- **ESG Guidelines for PIF portfolio companies (PIF):** Standardized reporting disclosures for PIF-owned companies along with ESG scoring.
- **GCC Exchanges Committee ESG Disclosures (GCC Exchanges Committee):** A set of guidelines of unified ESG metrics aimed to align GCC markets with global sustainability standards, with an emphasis on regional ESG priorities for listed companies in the GCC exchange markets.

## Taxonomies and rating systems

- **ESG Rating Framework “Inclusive ESG Framework and Scoring Methodology”:** A framework providing fair ratings to companies in emerging economies, with a higher emphasis on performance improvement compared to country risks to eliminate bias in companies’ ratings and ensure fair comparison.

## Partnerships - multi-stakeholder involvement

- **Protection of victims of human trafficking (UN and KSA Human Rights Commission):** A partnership between Saudi Arabia’s Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to protect current and potential victims of human trafficking and detect and persecute perpetrators. This partnership has launched the first ever national referral mechanism in order to help identify victims.
- **The Future Investment Initiative (FII and PIF):** An annual event from the Future Investment Initiative Institute and the Public Investment Fund to bring together global leaders, investors, and innovators to discuss the country’s economy. A key achievement has been the development of an ESG framework and scoring methodology.
- **Saudi Capital Market Forum (Tadawul):** An annual event to bring together leaders, issuers, investors, and government entities to showcase Saudi ESG efforts.
- **Saudi Green Initiative and Middle East Green Initiative (Saudi Green Initiative):** National and regional efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change and improve quality of life for future generations. Key goals include protecting 30% of the Kingdom’s land and sea by 2030 and planning 50 billion trees across the Middle East.

## Partnerships - public private partnerships

- **Government Partnership with HSBC (Ministry of Investment):** The Ministry of Investment and HSBC have partnered to attract capital into the Kingdom supported by HSBC providing up to \$1 trillion in financing to support the realization of Vision 2030.
- **Carbon Capture and Storage (CCUS) Hub (Aramco, Ministry of Energy and Schlumberger):** Saudi Aramco, Schlumberger and the Ministry of Energy have joined forces to develop a carbon capture hub facility aiming to store up to 9 mtps of CO<sup>2</sup> by 2027.
- **Hydrogen mobility projects (Ministry of Energy):** The Ministry of Energy along with eight partnering entities are establishing projects such as hydrogen fueled transportation and various other applications. These projects aim to diversify the Kingdom’s energy sources in line with Vision 2030 and neutralizing emissions by 2060.

## Partnerships - special purpose vehicles

- **The Saudi Investment Recycling Company (PIF, MWAN):** SIRC, an SPV, was developed by the Public Investment Fund and the MWAN, the National Center for Water Management, to establish recycling capabilities in the Kingdom and build a circular economy for a more sustainable future.

## Partnerships - roundtables

- **Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) Forum (HRH Mohammed Bin Salman):** Annual forum showcases the tangible progress made towards SGI targets in the Kingdom while foraging partnerships in key sustainability sectors to accelerate progress towards climate goals.
- **Sustainable Council (Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources):** Annual council, bringing together key stakeholders to unify the efforts of the industry and mineral resources.

## Raising awareness and building capabilities - awards and competitions

- **Environmental management in the Islamic world award KSAEM (MEWA):** Issued by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on a bi-annual basis to honor individuals and private-sector institutions for their contributions to achieving the 2030 SDGs in environmental areas.
- **Best ESG Award (Tadawul):** An annual award to honor companies for their sustainability-related efforts.
- **King Khalid Sustainability Award (King Khalid Foundation):** An annual award to honor private and semi-governmental entities that adopt best ESG practices and initiatives.

## Raising awareness and building capabilities - awareness campaigns

- **Let’s Make it Green (MEWA):** Launched by the Ministry of Environment Water and Agriculture and the National Center for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification, this campaign was launched to plant 10 million trees in six months across the Kingdom to progress on the Vision 2030 objectives.
- **The Environment Week (MEWA):** Launched by the Ministry of Environment Water and Agriculture to host an annual week to raise individual awareness and responsibility and to achieve an environmentally conscious society specifically targeting topics related to desertification, waste management, pollution, and environmental protection.

## Raising awareness and building capabilities - capability building

- **Nokhab programs (SIDF):** Programs launched by SIDF focused on the development of Saudi talent by providing benefits to applicants such as financial rewards, social insurance, and allowances. This program focuses on Saudi talent with a bachelor’s degree.
- **Saudi Arabia TCFD 101 (Tadawul):** Launched by Saudi Tadawul Group in partnership with Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative, CDP, and the International Finance Corporation to host an online workshop, free of charge, to provide training on climate disclosures and give an overview of TCFD recommendations. The initiative is targeted towards companies on the Saudi Exchange.
- **MiSK Young Women’s Leadership Program (Mohammed Bin Salman Foundation):** Launched by the Mohammed Bin Salman Foundation to enhance women’s leadership potential and help them become influential members in the workplace, supporting the goals in Vision 2030.





SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

