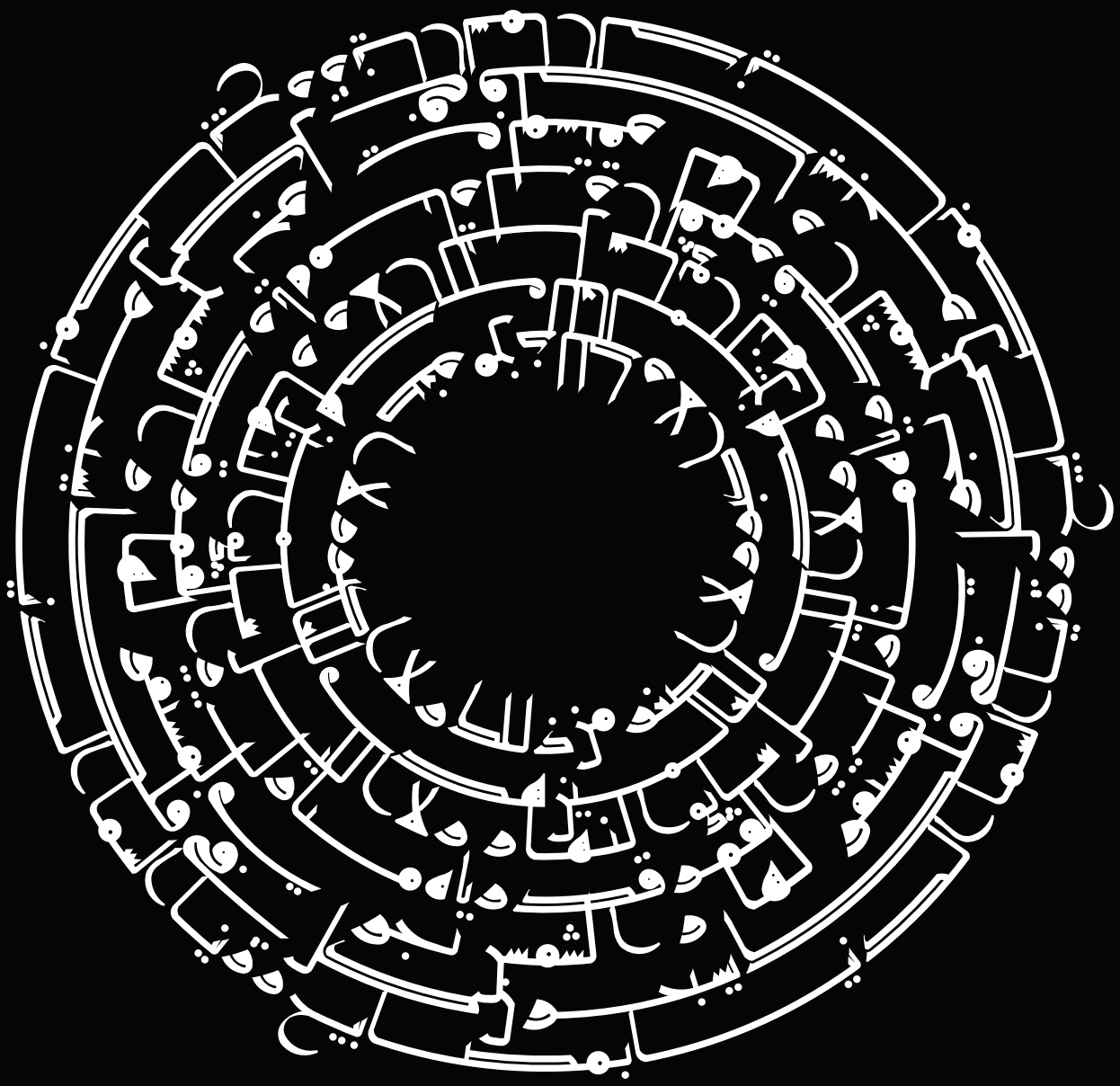
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The New Era II

How Soft Power is Redefining the Identity of Saudi Arabia

SPECIAL REPORT



Adornment of Stars, 2014 by Nasser Al Salem



MARAFY The Next Chapter of Urban Living

Transformative Destination, Immersive Experiences

مجموعة روشن
ROSHN GROUP



THE NEW ERA II
How Soft Power is Redefining the Identity of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's transformation is no longer a promise on the horizon but an unfolding reality reshaping the nation's economy, society, and global standing. Vision 2030, announced less than a decade ago, has evolved from an ambitious blueprint into a practical force, restructuring the Kingdom's urban fabric, investment climate, and cultural landscape. Today, Saudi Arabia is not merely attracting capital and tourists; it is reinventing the very definition of economic diversification by integrating quality of life, cultural heritage, innovation, and global connectivity into its national growth model.

The New Era II as conceived as a strategic editorial endeavor to document and analyze this transformation at a pivotal moment. The report builds on our first edition, offering a deeper, more focused exploration of the sectors that embody the Kingdom's transition from a hydrocarbon-dependent economy to a diversified, innovation-driven ecosystem. Tourism, hospitality, entertainment, sports, culture, quality of life, healthcare, education, and investment are no longer peripheral components of economic planning; they are the new growth engines fueling Saudi Arabia's ambitions.

Across the report's chapters, we highlight the nation's flagship initiatives such as NEOM, Red Sea Global, Diriyah, King Salman Park, New Murabba, and the upcoming King Salman International Airport as benchmarks of how bold urban planning and infrastructure investment can unlock FDI, drive innovation, and generate high-value employment. These projects are not isolated ventures but interconnected nodes of an emerging ecosystem that positions Saudi Arabia as a competitive global hub for business, culture, and tourism.

Equally significant is the Kingdom's strategy of integrating quality of life into urban development. Vision 2030 recognizes that prosperity is no longer defined solely by GDP growth but by livability, sustainability, and inclusivity. The development of parks, wellness-driven healthcare systems, and sports facilities reflects this understanding. Riyadh's King Salman Park, for example, is designed to reimagine the urban experience for residents and visitors alike, blending green space, cultural venues, and economic opportunity. This emphasis on livability resonates across all gigaprojects, turning cities and destinations into engines of both social cohesion and investment appeal.

The private sector's rising role is another defining characteristic of this new era. From the privatization of football clubs under the National Privatization Program to the partnerships driving hotel expansions and the localization of supply chains under the Made in Saudi initiative, the Kingdom is actively cultivating an open, competitive investment climate. Public-private collaboration is enabling international investors to participate not just as financiers, but as partners in nation-building. This shift has positioned Saudi Arabia as a magnet for global capital at a time when investors seek both returns and long-term strategic impact.

The report also underscores how soft power, through culture, sports, and entertainment, is strengthening the Kingdom's international profile. Saudi Arabia is leveraging mega-events such as Expo 2030, the Club World Cup 2025, and the 2034 World Cup to project its brand as a destination that is modern, open, and globally connected. The cultural industries, exemplified by initiatives such as Noor Riyadh and the Red Sea Film Festival, nurture local talent while amplifying Saudi voices on the international stage. Sports investments and partnerships, from the Saudi Pro League to winter sports, reinforce this positioning by blending economic diversification with diplomacy and global fan engagement.

At the heart of this editorial project lies the conviction that Saudi Arabia's transformation is not merely about building iconic structures or hosting world-class events. It is about building a sustainable ecosystem where innovation, inclusivity, and resilience converge. Each chapter in this report, whether focused on investment enablers, wellness-driven healthcare, or creative industries, reflects the interconnected nature of this transformation.

The New Era II aims to serve as more than a chronicle; it is a guide for stakeholders seeking to understand the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. For investors, it outlines the policies and partnerships shaping capital flows into new sectors. For policymakers, it highlights the reforms and collaborative frameworks enabling progress. For the global business community, it showcases how Saudi Arabia is becoming not just a market to enter, but a partner in shaping the future of industries that define the 21st century.

As editors, our mission is to capture this extraordinary momentum with rigor and clarity. By combining on-the-ground reporting, exclusive interviews with leading decision-makers, and forward-looking analyses, we hope to present a comprehensive picture of a nation at the crossroads of transformation. ✖

This publication has been produced by The Business Year International's expert cadre of journalists, writers, editors, and designers. The content contained within is original and was compiled by our team on the ground.

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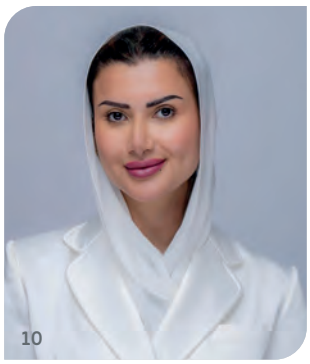
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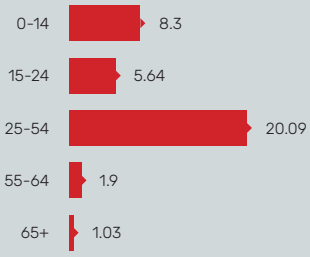
2024 NON-OIL SECTOR PERFORMANCE, KEY INDICATORS

SOURCE: VISION 2030

Overall real GDP growth	1.3%
Real non-oil GDP growth compared to 2023	3.9%
Growth rate in non-oil activities	4.3%
Inbound FDI (4Q2024)	$20.69BN

SAUDI POPULATION BY AGE (MILLION)

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH



GLOBAL INSTITUTION GROWTH FORECASTS (2025-2026)

SOURCE: VISION 2030

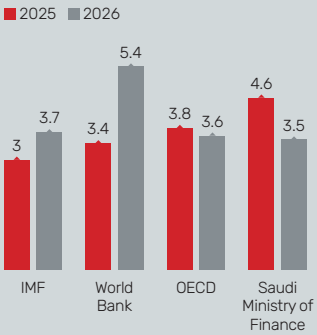




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FROM VISION TO REALITY: The Role Of The Leading Initiatives For National Transformation

New Ecosystem, *National Transformation*

When Saudi Arabia unveiled Vision 2030 in 2016, it set forth not just a policy agenda, but a transformative blueprint for reimagining the Kingdom's economic and social foundations. Less than a decade later, the country stands at a decisive inflection point: the vision is becoming reality. The vast array of flagship projects launched under Vision 2030, ranging from futuristic cities to cultural districts and green public spaces, are no longer abstract plans but tangible milestones reshaping the Kingdom's landscape. Together, they are positioning Saudi Arabia as a competitive global hub for investment, innovation, and sustainable growth.

This transformation is most vividly embodied in the gigaprojects that define the era. NEOM, often described as a living laboratory for future technologies and sustainable urbanism, is not only pioneering new models for energy, mobility, and digital ecosystems, but is also home to a growing global community of innovators. New Murabba is rethinking urban districts for the next century, integrating advanced mobility, smart infrastructure, and human-centric design. Diriyah, the birthplace of the Saudi royal family and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is being transformed into a global cultural capital. On the Red Sea coast, Red Sea Global is setting new benchmarks for regenerative tourism, combining environmental stewardship with world-class hospitality to redefine the global luxury travel experience.

In Riyadh, King Salman Park and Sports Boulevard are transforming public spaces into engines of economic vitality, well-being, and livability, while Soudah Peaks, rising above the Aseer mountains, adds a new dimension to the Kingdom's tourism portfolio by blending ultra-luxury experiences with cultural preservation and environmental restoration.

These initiatives are more than architectural landmarks. They represent an intentional effort to build ecosystems. More importantly, they serve as magnets for FDI, enabled by regulatory reforms, transparent governance, and an increasingly investor-friendly business climate.

Programs like the Quality of Life initiative have already helped double non-oil revenues while making Saudi cities more livable, vibrant, and globally appealing. The implications reach beyond economics. By hosting global events such as Riyadh Expo 2030 and World Cup 2034, Saudi Arabia is leveraging its new urban and cultural infrastructure to position itself as a bridge between regions, a center for dialogue, and a destination for talent and capital.

In transforming ambition into action, Saudi Arabia is demonstrating that strategic projects rooted in culture, innovation, and sustainability can redefine a nation's place in the global economy. The Kingdom's journey from vision to reality signals a profound reordering of its economic priorities and offers a compelling model of how infrastructure and ecosystems together can shape a vibrant and resilient future. ✖



Image: DGDA

SPOTLIGHT FEATURE

GIGAPROJECTS

More than just infrastructure projects, Saudi Arabia's gigaprojects embody the Kingdom's vision to combine innovation, sustainability, and cultural heritage to create forward-looking destinations.

SAUDI ARABIA'S gigaprojects, such as NEOM, the Red Sea, and Diriyah represent the Kingdom's most ambitious redefinition of modern living, tourism, and heritage preservation. More than just an infrastructural project, NEOM is focused on creating an inclusive, forward-thinking community and shaping a new model for sustainable urban life that integrates technology, environment, and culture. Red Sea Global, meanwhile, emphasizes the mission of diversifying the economy through sustainable tourism. With five resorts already operational and 19 planned by 2025 across the Red Sea Project and AMAALA, the company blends luxury and accessibility while protecting pristine natural ecosystems. At Diriyah, the spiritual heart of the Kingdom, a 14.2-million-sqm development honors the Saudi heritage while evolving into a sustainable, walkable city adorned with green spaces and public parks. Collectively, these projects showcase Saudi Arabia's vision of uniting heritage, innovation, and sustainability to create globally admired yet authentically Saudi destinations.

Rayan Fayez
DEPUTY CEO,
NEOM

John Pagano
CEO,
RED SEA GLOBAL

Jerry Inzerillo
GROUP CEO,
DIRIYAH COMPANY



Rayan Fayez
DEPUTY CEO,
NEOM

NEOM is more than infrastructure; it is about community. We now have nearly 4,000 people from around the world living in NEOM. It is truly a melting pot of cultures, skills, and innovation. Life at NEOM is designed to be inclusive, inspiring, and bold, just like the vision that guides it. We are building not only a city but a new model for urban living, one that redefines what is possible for society, the economy, and the environment.



John Pagano
CEO,
RED SEA GLOBAL

The Red Sea region has completely redefined the preconceptions I had about Saudi Arabia. When I first visited, I was stunned by the pristine islands, turquoise waters, and thriving coral reefs along the west coast. Our mission has always been aligned with Vision 2030: diversifying the economy and creating a globally competitive tourism industry. We began with our first resort opening in November 2023, and we now have five resorts operational. By the end of 2025, we will complete 19 resorts between the Red Sea Project and AMAALA, located 150km north. A common misconception is that the Red Sea is exclusively for the ultra-wealthy. While our first resorts catered to the high-end market, our pipeline includes mid-tier offerings to ensure broader accessibility, especially to regional travelers. We also use technology to monitor environmental impact in real-time, ensuring our growth remains sustainable and aligned with the carrying capacity of the destination.



Jerry Inzerillo
GROUP CEO,
DIRIYAH COMPANY

Diriyah is the soul of the Kingdom. While Saudi National Day celebrates the 95th anniversary of the modern state, Founding Day on February 22 commemorates the 300-year history of the First Saudi State. Diriyah was its birthplace. Built from mud and palm in the heart of the desert, it represents authenticity, heritage, and national identity. Our role is not only to preserve this legacy but to bring it into the future with a sustainable, walkable city integrated with public parks and green spaces. Diriyah spans 14.2 million sqm. We have already planted 6 million trees and completed 9km of parks. As an expat who has worked around the world, I can say this is my legacy project and the most meaningful of my life. With 83% of our team Saudi, 39% of whom are women, we are delivering something that combines heritage, sustainability, and diplomacy.



CENTER *of growth*

RCU and AlUla stand as examples of how Saudi Arabia is transforming its cultural and natural assets into engines of growth fully aligned with the Kingdom's long-term vision.

Abeer AlAkel
CEO,
ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA (RCU)

How does AlUla's development strategy align with Vision 2030 in driving cultural renaissance and sustainable economic growth?
RCU's strategy is closely aligned with the ambitions of Vision 2030 as we grow and diversify AlUla's economy, elevate quality of life and harness culture as a driver of prosperity. We have developed a unique framework to shape the transformation of AlUla, termed "comprehensive regeneration," that balances preservation with progress, ensuring we integrate and harmonize cultural, social, environmental and economic considerations in AlUla's development. We are advancing growth across multiple sectors, including tourism, heritage, agriculture, film, sports, arts and education. These industries are supported by infrastructure and urban development projects that enhance connectivity and mobility. Equally important is our investment in people. Through training institutes, educational programs and community development initiatives, we are equipping residents with the skills and confidence to lead AlUla's transformation. This approach ensures that progress is inclusive and that the benefits of regeneration are felt across the entire community. AlUla welcomed 286,000 visitors with over 90% satisfaction in 2024, created over 6,000 new jobs, and saw more than 5,200 SMEs generate combined revenues exceeding SAR21 million.

Can you elaborate on the role of public-private partnerships in AlUla's development?
PPPs lie at the heart of AlUla's development model and our vision for sustainable, inclusive growth. By pairing public oversight with private-sector expertise, we are translating strategic plans into tangible results. AlUla's regeneration is progressing in collaboration with an extensive network of national and global partners, from inter-governmental agreements to partnerships with international organizations, investors, and private sector entities which bring world-class expertise, technology and assets to AlUla. Our collaborations represent shared purpose and value. Through them, AlUla demonstrates that comprehensive regeneration can drive diversified, sustainable growth, attracting global investment while delivering benefits that endure for generations.

What are the key developments in AlUla's tourism infrastructure aimed at enhancing the visitor experience?
AlUla is being developed as a year-round, world-class cultural destination unlike anywhere else in the world, a place where heritage, culture and nature converge to inspire discovery, creativity and connection. To achieve this vision, we are investing in an integrated infrastructure network that matches the scale and significance of AlUla's heritage. The AlUla Experiential Tram, spanning 22.4km, will connect our heritage sites, Cultural Oasis, and key urban centers, becoming the world's longest battery-powered, cable-free tramway. The recently extended AlUla International Airport enables greater global connectivity, welcoming direct flights from Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dubai, Doha, Amman, and Manama. Beyond infrastructure, our focus is on curating meaningful, authentic experiences that reflect the essence of AlUla. Visitor journeys are shaped by the storytellers and artisans who bring AlUla's heritage to life. Every experience, from guided tours at Hegra, the Kingdom's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, to farm visits in the Cultural Oasis, is designed to create a genuine connection between guests and the community. This approach reflects the ethos of the experience economy, where the true value of a visit lies not just in what people see, but in what they feel, learn and remember. Cultural festivals such as Winter at Tantora, AlUla Arts Festival and the Ancient Kingdoms Festival continue to expand our creative calendar, attracting diverse audiences and reinforcing AlUla's position as a global cultural hub. In 2024, more than 267,000 attendees participated in events.

How does RCU ensure that AlUla's development benefits the local community?
Empowering the people of AlUla lies at the heart of RCU's mandate. Our approach to community development is holistic and long-term. It is anchored in education, skills development, and access to meaningful livelihoods. Through Elaa Academy and programs like Hammayah, over 6,500 residents have trained as heritage ambassadors. The AlUla Language Institute has improved communication skills for 3,500 residents, and 1,000 young people have earned international scholarships, bringing expertise back home. ✖

BIO

An accomplished executive and a founding member of the RCU team, Abeer AlAkel has led and overseen the development and implementation of key strategic initiatives in AlUla for the last seven years. She has driven major initiatives, including the Cultural Oasis Regeneration Centre, focusing on sustainable development, education, and agritourism. As chief of special cultural zones, she has delivered key projects such as the Journey Through Time masterplan and the Cultural Oasis District. She also led global partnerships with UNESCO, IUCN, Panthera, and the World Bank, and launched Winter at Tantora, earning Guinness World Records for Maraya and the hot air balloon show. A former PwC consultant, Abeer holds degrees from King Saud University and Harvard Business School.

TRANSFORMATIVE *journey*



The QoL Program Center continues to advance Vision 2030 by expanding green and cultural infrastructure in the Kingdom and enhancing urban livability, all while implementing policies to attract expatriates and guide authentic development.

Khalid AlBaker
CEO,
QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) PROGRAM
CENTER

Can you elaborate on the organization's key milestones in the past year, particularly in enhancing the Kingdom's non-oil revenue streams and urban development initiatives?
Over the past year, the QoL Program Center has made significant strides in line with Vision 2030's objectives. Notably, we have successfully concluded more than 76 initiatives, effectively doubling our non-oil revenues to SAR17.8 billion, surpassing our initial targets. In urban development, we have established 149 parks and planted over 1.12 million trees, contributing to greener urban spaces and improved air quality. Culturally, we have launched venues such as the TeamLab Museum and the King Fahd Cultural Center, and organized over 3,327 days of cultural events nationwide, enriching the Kingdom's cultural landscape. We also hosted prestigious sports tournaments, including the Spanish and Italian Super Cups, as well as national championships for amateur athletes. The Balady platform now serves over 4.8 million users, enhancing municipal service accessibility. In the sports sector, the MAHD Academy is operational, fostering athletic talent and promoting a sports culture. These accomplishments collectively enhance the quality of life and diversify our economy beyond oil dependency.

What policies have been implemented to attract expatriates and ensure their seamless integration into the Kingdom's socioeconomic fabric?
To position Saudi Arabia as an attractive destination for global talent, we have adopted a multi-faceted approach. Investments span across sports, culture, entertainment, urban development, and security sectors. The expansion of Unified Security Operations Centers (911) now covers approximately 67% of the Kingdom, with full coverage anticipated in near future, ensuring safety and security for all residents. Collaborations with the Ministry of Interior maintain high safety standards, fostering a secure environment for all residents of the Kingdom. Additionally, initiatives such as the Premium Residency Program offer expatriates enhanced rights and benefits, facilitating their integration into the Kingdom's socioeconomic landscape. Our efforts to improve expatriate living conditions have led to satisfaction levels reaching 69.6% in 2024, surpassing the planned target of 67%. This comprehensive strategy not only attracts international professionals but also enriches the Kingdom's cultural diversity.

As Saudi Arabia looks to global cities for inspiration, which urban centers serve as benchmarks for your development strategies?
While we draw insights from urban centers around the world, our primary focus is on preserving Saudi Arabia's unique cultural and environmental identity. By analyzing international indices, we have identified key aspects of livability and lifestyle pertinent to our context. Each initiative undergoes rigorous benchmarking to ensure it aligns with our national ethos. The recently launched Saudi Architecture Characters Map exemplifies this approach, providing guidelines that reflect our historical and cultural essence while accommodating modern urban needs. This strategy ensures that our urban development is both globally informed and authentically Saudi.

Could you provide more details on the Saudi Architecture Characters Map and its role in guiding regional urban development?
The Saudi Architecture Characters Map is a strategic initiative designed to preserve and promote the Kingdom's architectural heritage. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all regional approach, we have developed a framework rooted in historic contexts, resulting in a tailored map of architectural identities. By offering developers guidelines that allow for modern building materials without imposing additional financial burdens, the map facilitates sustainable and culturally relevant urban development. This initiative underscores our commitment to creating urban spaces that honor our past while embracing the future.

What strategies are being employed to attract private sector investment aimed at enhancing the quality of life in Saudi Arabia's urban areas?
In collaboration with the Ministry of Investment, we have undertaken comprehensive regulatory reforms to foster an investor-friendly environment across various sectors. With upcoming global events like Riyadh Expo 2030 and the 2034 FIFA World Cup, significant opportunities have emerged in sports, culture, and entertainment. The Public Investment Fund has initiated gigaprojects such as NEOM and Qiddiya, serving as catalysts for private sector participation. By offering transparent investment opportunities and streamlining processes, we are inviting both local and international investors to contribute to the Kingdom's transformative journey. ✖

BIO

Khalid AlBaker was appointed CEO of the Quality of Life Program Center in 2022. He currently serves on a diverse range of boards and committees, the most recent one being member of Hail Municipality Company's founding board, in addition to the architectural urban identity committee, and two Quality of Life (QoL) Program subcommittees; one representing the QoL Conference and the other focusing on creativity and innovation. Prior to joining the QoL Program, AlBaker held many positions and led a number of projects in the sports, entertainment, and tourism sectors. He holds a master's degree in business administration from Al Yamamah University in Riyadh.



Image: DGDA

PROJECTS *of great vision*

Launched in April 2016, the KSA's Vision 2030 is a cultural and economic watershed for the Kingdom.

SAUDI ARABIA VISION 2030 is a comprehensive roadmap of strategic projects where FDI drives diversification from hydrocarbons and international competitiveness across priority sectors. The Vision, then, is the Kingdom's blueprint for future-proofing economic and cultural relevance in a flourishing new era. Meanwhile, what's emerging is a more knowledge-based nation of sustainable, smart cities, where quality of life meets social opportunity.

Saudi Arabia's gigaprojects are comprehensive, living schemes and effectively gears in a giant socioeconomic machine. These projects, comprising smaller ones, invite technological knowhow across all sectors from real estate, to healthcare, hospitality and energy, while establishing local value chains. Take NEOM, which, as Deputy CEO Rayan Fayez declares, is "more than infrastructure; it is about community." NEOM, emblematic of internationalization, is to date home to around 4,000 people. As a "melting pot of cultures, skills, and innovation [...] NEOM is new model for urban living, one that redefines what is possible for society, economy, and the environment." Another smart city project is Riyadh's New Murabba, a Public Investment Fund (PIF) company. In his presentation Unlocking Opportunity: Global Capital and the Rise of Saudi Arabia's Residential Market, Executive Director of Sales Robert Pearce explained it purpose as "building a human-centric urban destination based on innovation, sustainability, and heritage." Vision 2030 targets the delivery of over 1 million homes, over 362,000 hotel keys, over 7.4 million sqm of retail space, and more than 7.7 million sqm of new office space. Accordingly, Knight Frank forecasts construction sector value scaling USD191 billion in 2029, up around 30% from 2024.

The Kingdom's regulatory transparency and streamlined commercial environment are conducive to entrepreneurship inviting lasting partnerships. Zoning regulations have permitted freehold foreign ownership in key areas such as NEOM, Riyadh, and Jeddah. The Riyadh regional headquarters program offers a 30-year corporate income tax exemption, withholding tax relief, and regulatory support for multinationals, among other incentives. In January 2025, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) permitted foreign investment in Saudi-listed companies owning real estate in the Holy Cities; sites



of pilgrimage tourism that boast vast projects like the USD7-billion mixed-use Thakher Makkah development located near the Grand Mosque.

Vision 2030 targets USD100 billion in FDI, no less than 5.9% of GDP. Official data counts around 600 international firms downing sticks locally since 2021, with 25 opening their regional headquarters locally in 1H2025. Greenfield FDI projects, meanwhile, rose 30.1% YoY in 1H2025 to 203. A June 2025 General Authority for Statistics report put net FDI into Saudi Arabia at USD5.9 billion in 1Q2025, up 44% from the same period of 2024. Leading the field on 30% of the total was the US with 61 projects worth USD2.1 billion, followed by Egypt with a capital investment of USD1.81 billion in 11 projects and China with USD858.3 million sunk into 11 projects. Notable capital investment of USD1.92 billion went to the communications sector. Real estate followed on a greenfield FDI print of USD1.79 billion from nine projects, notably fueled by an Egypt-based real estate consortium, led by Paragon Developments and El-Attal Holding, which committed USD1.7 billion to multiple mixed-use real estate projects in Riyadh and Jeddah.

In 2034 the entire planet will turn to Saudi Arabia for the FIFA World Cup, a prime opportunity to showcase culture and hospitality. Four years earlier, the Kingdom's sports economy is estimated to have scaled USD22.4 billion. For the big event, 15 new sustainably-designed smart stadiums are earmarked.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, rooted in pride in local heritage is committed to developing local content. In this vein, Jerry Inzerillo, the Group CEO of Diriyah Company explains how, "Diriyah is the soul of the Kingdom, its birthplace [representing] authenticity, heritage, and national identity." Billed as the Kingdom's preeminent new cultural and lifestyle destination, spanning 14.2 million sqm the Diriyah project, nestled amid six million newly- planted trees, also features "20 million mud bricks to preserve the authenticity of the city." Diriyah is also a beacon of Saudization. "With 83% of our team Saudi, 39% of whom are women, he adds, "we are delivering something that combines heritage, sustainability, and diplomacy."

Embodying the vision's commitment to environmental sustainability is Red Sea Global, a landmark project on that pristine coastline. TBY spoke with CEO John Pagano, who explained how the project is the "world's largest tourism destination that is entirely off-grid and powered by renewable energy 24/7." Namely, "upon completion of Phase One, we will have offset 1 million tons of CO2 emissions." The Kingdom's renewables commitment is also exemplified by an USD8.3-billion consortium led by ACWA Power and Aramco Power erecting five solar and two wind power plants set to generate 15GW of electricity by 2028. The project is a step closer to realizing the Kingdom's goal of 50% renewable energy generation by 2030.

Saudi Arabia's transformative gigaprojects reflect both the Kingdom's localized value chains and diversified global presence, presenting an opportunity for citizen and foreigner alike to share the experience. ✖



Tony Douglas
CEO,
RIYADH AIR

BIO

Tony Douglas joined Riyadh Air as CEO in late 2022 to help establish Saudi Arabia's new world-class airline. He has held several leadership positions at Abu Dhabi Airports, Abu Dhabi Sea Ports, Laing O'Rouke, BAA, Kenwood Group, BAE Systems, the UK Ministry of Defence, Equipment and Support, and most recently at Etihad Airways. Douglas occupies board positions as the chairman of specialist UK engineering contractor Keltbray and was also director of the board of Abu Dhabi Airports Company for several years.

LAUNCHING Riyadh Air is not just about creating another airline; it is about redefining global connectivity from and to Saudi Arabia. Aviation is about people, cultures, and business opportunities. With Riyadh emerging as a world-class destination, it is our responsibility to build an airline that provides seamless, premium connectivity for both international travelers and Saudi citizens.

We are proud to have strategic partnerships with American companies, including GE for our engines, and Delta Air Lines as a headline partner. Our fleet includes Boeing 787 Dreamliners, with the first batch already on the assembly line in Charleston, South Carolina. Though there are supply chain challenges globally, we are meeting our delivery targets through strong partnerships and proactive planning.

We are working to offer a guest experience that begins before boarding, whether from New York or Atlanta, with the same Saudi hospitality travelers will experience upon arrival in Riyadh or anywhere across the Kingdom. Riyadh Air will be a flagship carrier not just in name, but in redefining the aviation experience. ✖

**Remarks from the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh, May 2025.*



Michael Dyke
CEO,
NEW MURABBA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

BIO

Michael Dyke is a seasoned infrastructure chief executive, with over 35 years of experience leading large-scale business enterprises and projects across multiple sectors and geographies, having held senior positions at EDF, National Grid, Lend Lease, Skanska, and Balfour Beatty, where he is currently a member of the group executive committee, responsible as CEO for the company's interests in HS2, Europe's largest infrastructure project.

STEPPING into this role has been transformative. Within the first hour of arriving in Riyadh, I witnessed families enjoying public life with enthusiasm and warmth that was truly inspiring. What is unique about our work is that we are not just building for today; we are designing the future. New Murabba is about creating an urban district that is future proof, where the infrastructure, mobility, and urban experience anticipate what the world will need decades from now. Challenges are immense, but that is why we are here. We did not come for an easy task; we came to achieve what others believe is impossible. The ambition here is not incremental but exponential. The team is fully aligned to ensure we build a district that sets global benchmarks in innovation, technology, and livability. ✖

**Remarks from the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh, May 2025.*

THE NEW FACE *of Riyadh*

King Salman Park, Sports Boulevard, and King Salman International Airport all embody Riyadh's transformation into a global city that combines sustainability, wellbeing, and connectivity to drive economic growth and quality of life in line with Vision 2030.



George Tanasijevich
CEO,
KING SALMAN PARK FOUNDATION

KING SALMAN PARK is far more than just a park; it is a bold statement of Saudi Arabia's urban renaissance, one of the four landmark projects shaping Riyadh's future, an emblem of the country's commitment to building cities that put people, nature and culture at the heart of progress. Looking at the scale and ambition of this project, over 17.2sqkm in the center of Riyadh, it is hard not to be inspired. However, what makes it truly special is the impact it will have, not just for this generation, but for the ones that follow. It is a space that belongs to the community, designed to improve everyday life and make Riyadh more walkable, livable, and connected. More than just about planting trees or creating recreational zones, it is a chance for residents and visitors to experience wellness, creativity and community all in one place. Our vision is to create an inclusive, vibrant and truly inspiring destination, a place where culture and creativity flourish and public space enriches lives. If we think about Riyadh's future as a leading global city, projects like King Salman Park are essential. They reflect a broader shift in how we think about cities, as ecosystems that must nurture people, and the environment, in equal measures.



Jayne E. McGivern
CEO,
SPORTS BOULEVARD FOUNDATION

THE SPORTS BOULEVARD makes Riyadh more livable by design. It introduces 4 million sqm of green space and more than 50 multidisciplinary sports facilities into the heart of the city. It also transforms previously underutilized areas into vibrant, accessible zones for recreation and leisure. These interventions directly support Saudi Vision 2030's Quality of Life Program, which seeks to elevate Riyadh's global ranking as one of the world's most livable cities. Over the next decade, this emphasis on wellbeing, sustainability, and placemaking will position Riyadh as a destination for global talent, investment, and innovation. As more cities compete for skilled residents and sustainable lifestyles, the Sports Boulevard will stand as a global benchmark for how urban regeneration can drive economic and social vitality. Over 1 million visitors have engaged with the open zones, including young people, families, and women. Surveys show a rise in daily physical activity, improved perceptions of safety, and stronger community cohesion. Environmental indicators are also encouraging. In pilot zones, surface temperatures have fallen by up to 5 degrees Celsius due to landscaping and shade. We see signs of increased economic activity and property value uplift in neighboring areas, showing how the project is sparking broader urban regeneration.

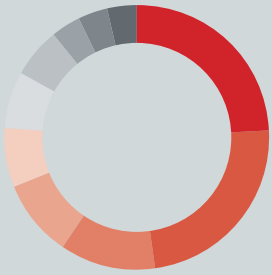


Marco Mejia
ACTING CEO,
KING SALMAN INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

THE KINGDOM has undergone a significant social and economic transformation, opening up for businesses and tourism. As a result, passenger numbers at King Salman International Airport (KSIA) are predicted to reach 100 million by 2030. KSIA will be essential in meeting Vision 2030 and National Tourism Strategy targets. It is a visionary project linked to the broader national transport and logistics strategy and will provide Saudi Arabia with a sustainable, integrated multimodal transport network supporting both businesses and consumers. As a key part of the vision's goals for sustainable economic growth and diversification, the airport will serve as vital strategic infrastructure, enhancing the Kingdom's global competitiveness by establishing Riyadh as a prominent aviation hub. KSIA's geographic location at the nexus of three continents will serve as a gateway to other countries and regions, opening opportunities for new trade partnerships and investments. The airport is poised to become a major regional hub, attracting international investment and catalyzing the expansion of trade and commerce on local, regional, and global scales. Positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, the airport is well equipped to accommodate future demands in tourism and trade. It will accelerate the capital's growth, solidifying Riyadh's status as a significant global player.

LOANS MARKET SHARE (2Q2025)

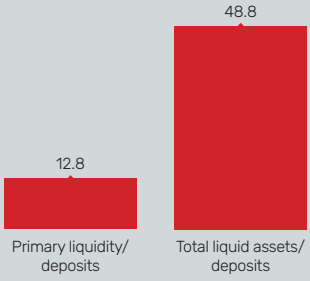
SOURCE: ALJAZIRA CAPITAL



24.4%	ALRAJHI	**6.9%**	BSF
23.5%	SNB	**6.1%**	ANB
11.7%	RIBL	**3.8%**	ALBILAD
9.3%	SAB	**3.6%**	SAIB
7.2%	ALINMA	**3.4%**	BJAZ

BANKING SECTOR LIQUIDITY RATIOS (2024)

SOURCE: SAUDI CENTRAL BANK, BANK AUDI'S GROUP RESEARCH DEPARTMENT



FDI INFLOWS (% OF GDP)

SOURCE: WORLD BANK

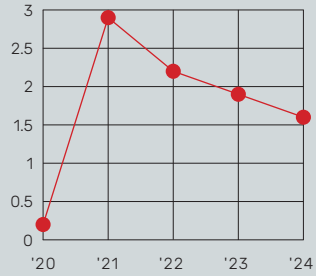




Image: M. Sadoon

CAPITALIZING THE KINGDOM'S FUTURE: Investment Enablers

Risk *& reward*

Saudi Arabia's transformation into an experiential economy built on culture, sport, entertainment, and tourism demands more than a bold whitepaper. It requires financial architecture, including banks, fund managers, and institutional financiers that can structure risk, allocate capital, and catalyze private participation. In 2025, several moves highlight how Saudi Arabia's financial sector is stepping into that role. At the heart is the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) acting as a financial enabler. In September 2025, CDF unveiled a co-lending product intended to unlock more than SAR1 billion in financing for cultural projects, in collaboration with five leading financial institutions including Al-Raedah Finance, Manafa Finance, Raya Financing, Lendo, and Abdul Latif Jameel Finance. This mechanism, whereby the state fund shares in risk and leverages private capital, is a template for how banks and non-bank lenders can be integrated into creative-economy financing. Another major instance is the launch of the Cultural Assets Group Fund, a closed-end investment vehicle valued at USD227 million and backed by CDF. The way this fund is structured, with public anchor investment and private management, invites asset managers and specialist funds to participate, enabling global capital to flow via recognized institutional conduits. Beyond culture, in the broader investment sphere, Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth engine, PIF, continues to forge ties with global financial institutions. In 2025, PIF agreed to become the anchor investor in new Gulf-focused funds run by Goldman Sachs, targeting both public equities and private credit strategies across the region. This arrangement strengthens domestic asset management capacity while making Saudi projects more accessible to global capital. Linked to that, Western wealth managers are also making moves: for example, London's Stanhope Capital forged a strategic partnership with PIF-owned Gulf International Bank to offer wealth management to ultra-high-net-worth and institutional investors within Saudi and the GCC. These developments signal a maturation of financing capacity. Banks and financial institutions are transitioning from passive intermediaries to active co-investors, credit providers, and structurers in experience-driven sectors. They will underwrite new venues, media infrastructure, festivals, tourism infrastructure, and sports franchises, all assembly lines of soft power and returns. Regulatory reforms reinforce this: foreign investment rules in the entertainment sector have been liberalized, and the 2025 US State Department's Investment Climate Statement emphasizes Saudi Arabia's efforts to relax ownership constraints in entertainment, sport, and cultural zones. In sum, Saudi Arabia's pursuit of "experiential capital" is being anchored by a growing toolkit of financial enablers: state-backed funds, co-lending instruments, international fund partnerships, and banks evolving their roles. The shift is not simply about having projects or venues, but about embedding financial infrastructure such that capital (local and global) can systematically flow into culture, sport, entertainment, and tourism, amplifying both economic return and national influence. ✖

FOSTERING WELL-BEING

BUSINESS ENABLEMENT

Driving operational and financial efficiency to fuel sustainable business growth

10B SAR
quarterly transferred payrolls

11M SAR
financed for businesses

83%
CSAT score for PMS

48
NPS score for PMS

+62%
market share for PMS

FINTECH

Enabling every step of your customer journey — from verification to scoring to repayment.

Reducing response time
from days to 6 minutes

Reduce risk and automated
customer journey

CUSTOMER EXELLENCE

An AI Agent that interacts just like Human

Reduce response time
from 5 minutes to 0

double the number
of served customers

Increase CSAT to
93%

80%
cost reduction

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health Insurance Compliance, Never Been Easier

+50K
Active SMEs

+120K
issued polices

50%
coverage of health insurer market

10s
to add or remove employees





EYE *on the prize*

SDB is dedicated to advancing sustainable development goals and has a significant war chest to effect broad economic and social change.

Sultan bin Abdulaziz AlHamidi
CEO,
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK (SDB)

What role do you see SDB playing in the broader context of Saudi Arabia's economic and social growth, particularly in supporting sustainable development?
SDB is dedicated to advancing sustainable development goals, including financial inclusion, equal opportunities, fostering innovation, supporting industry and infrastructure, creating economic opportunities, promoting distinct economic growth, and advancing social welfare. SDB is committed to empowering women and promoting sustainable and accessible services for cities and governorates. We also focus on fostering partnerships with both public and private sectors to drive and expedite the achievement of SDB's development objectives. Advancing sustainable development within the community is our primary focus at SDB. We are committed to empowering families, entrepreneurs, and women by supporting income-generating economic projects. SDB aligns its initiatives with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure its contributions are globally relevant and holistic.

In 1H2024, the bank provided significant financing to support individuals and enterprises. What are the broader economic and social impact of these financing activities?
In the first half of this year, SAR4.6 billion was allocated for funding, benefiting 70,000 citizens from various regions. The funding was distributed as follows: SAR1.7 billion to support self-employment practitioners and productive families, over SAR1.6 billion for financing small and emerging enterprises (benefiting 5,000 establishments), and SAR1.3 billion in social financing, benefiting more than 23,000 individuals. SDB, through the Dulani Business Center, offers initiatives such as training, guidance, and partnerships to support entrepreneurs and small business owners. This year, the Dulani Business Center hosted the Shour Dulani event in Jeddah, drawing 2,000 entrepreneurs and 250 consultants. The event delivered 4,000 specialized consultations across 15 fields in 10 cities at the same time, aimed at tackling business challenges and improving growth and efficiency.

How does SDB measure the success and impact of its social development tools and programs on the communities it serves?
We systematically evaluate the impact of our initiatives through rigorous assessments, gathering and analyzing data on key performance indicators. This process provides us with in-depth insights into the effectiveness of our programs. Additionally, we place great emphasis on actively engaging with communities and stakeholders, seeking their valuable feedback to enhance our understanding and decision-making processes. These measures collectively enable us to make informed decisions for future programs and continuously improve our initiatives, benefiting all stakeholders involved.

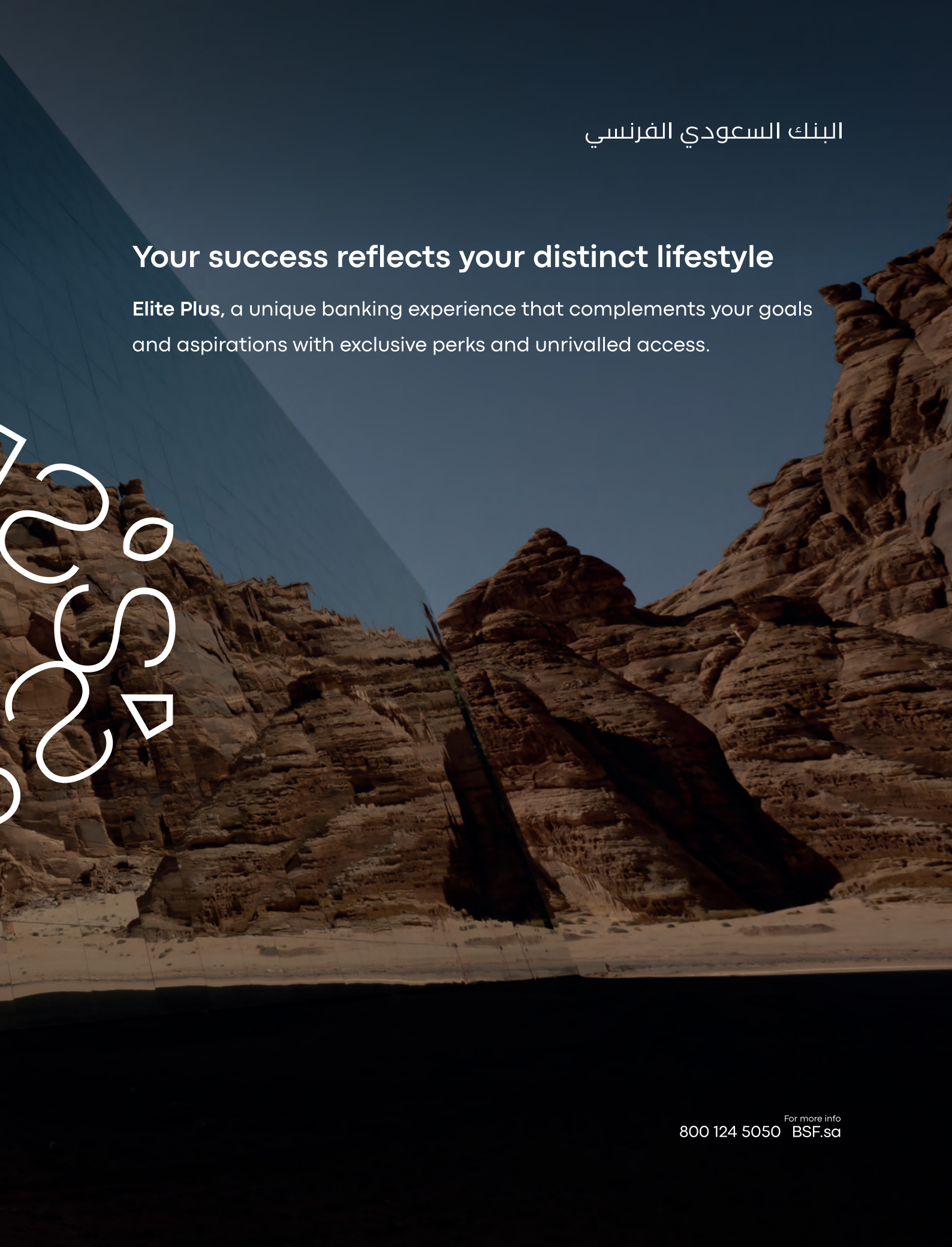
The recent cooperation agreement with Monsha'at aims to boost financing for SMEs. Can you elaborate on the specifics of this agreement and the expected impact on the SME sector?
This collaboration is designed to provide financial solutions and support for the growth of SMEs and the expansion of their businesses. The program offers financing to support the assets and operating costs of new businesses in the Kingdom. This initiative is in line with Monsha'at's objective to help SMEs grow and become more competitive by partnering with strategic allies from different sectors, both locally and globally. The goal is to create a supportive environment and promote a thriving society. Last year, we established a partnership with Monsha'at aimed at providing support to entrepreneurs venturing into the agricultural sector. This comprehensive program, offered through SDB, encompasses financial assistance, workshops, and training courses designed to foster entrepreneurship.

What are SDB's plans for future growth and expansion, both in terms of reach and the range of services offered?
SDB is committed to actively supporting entrepreneurs and fostering economic development. Our efforts include providing ongoing support and training for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and productive communities and promoting the fintech, gaming, and e-sports industry. Last year, the bank allocated over SAR35 billion to financing projects from 2023 to 2025, with SAR24 billion to finance entrepreneurs, small and emerging enterprises, and self-employed individuals. Notably, 65% of this budget is directed toward bordering cities. ✖

BIO

Sultan bin Abdulaziz AlHamidi is the CEO of SDB, appointed in 2024. Before joining SDB, he held various leadership roles at Bank AlJazira, the latest as deputy general manager for retail products. He also worked as assistant general manager and head of alternative channels at Al Rajhi Bank, project manager at Saudi Telecom Company (STC), and head of the control system department at Saudi Electricity Company (SEC). He is a board member on diverse institutions in the Kingdom, including the Cooperative Societies Council (CSC), Saudi Chemical Holding Company, the National Finance Company, and AlJazira Capital. He is also a board member at Monshaat. Al-Hamidi has participated as a spokesperson in numerous conferences and seminars, including the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum, held on the sidelines of Expo 2020 Dubai. He holds an MBA from King Saud University and a bachelor's degree in systems engineering from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals.


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ENABLER *of success*

BSF Capital's digital platform leverages active robo-advisory to democratize global market access and position the firm as a leading enabler of financial inclusion and diversification.

Salam AlKhunaizi
CEO & BOARD MEMBER,
SAUDI FRANSI CAPITAL
(BSF CAPITAL)

Against the backdrop of Vision 2030's ambitious transformation, how has BSF Capital redefined its mandate and aligned its investment strategy with national priorities?
Guided by the Financial Sector Development Program, we see our role as an enabler, channeling capital and capability toward themes where national priorities and market opportunity intersect. In urban regeneration, we partnered with King Salman Park and Naif Alrajhi Group to establish an investment fund that will develop the first private parcel within the park. With the General Entertainment Authority, our collaboration focuses on a business park that fosters a vibrant ecosystem for employers and talent, purely commercial in nature, without a hospitality component. On digital infrastructure, we launched Saudi Arabia's first data-center fund and secured a long-term agreement with a global hyperscaler. Our initial capacity is 32MW, and we are already planning expansions with the ambition to at least triple this over the next few years. Building ahead of demand has positioned us to meet international requirements as they localize critical workloads in the Kingdom. Beyond real estate and digitalization, BSF Capital has been at the forefront of bringing new sectors into the capital markets as we have advised on first-of-their-kind IPOs in fintech, household and personal care, water utilities, and aviation. A landmark example was Rasan, Saudi Arabia's first insurtech IPO. Guiding a young, high-growth company going public in an untapped sector required a deep understanding of market dynamics. Similar stories with AlMajed for Oud and Flynas reflect how we translate sector potential into capital markets success. These are more than transactions, but milestones in building new industries aligned with Vision 2030.

How does BSF Capital position itself to address challenges in the Saudi asset management industry?
Our first challenge is distribution. Unlike retail banks, we do not have direct access to mass retail clients. To bridge this gap, we are launching our digital platform, BSF Invest, which will serve as our gateway to both affluent and retail investors. Through this platform, we will offer robo-advisory services at launch, with goal-based investment programs, crowdfunding opportunities, and private credit solutions to follow. By 2026, the platform will provide a full suite of products designed to diversify beyond the traditional dominance of real estate funds. Another challenge is addressing the financing needs of SMEs, which remain underserved in the Kingdom. Our platform will enable private credit opportunities, working with partner institutions that act as agents to provide financing, thereby offering investors attractive returns while diversifying credit provision beyond banks. Finally, we see the need to educate and empower investors to move beyond real estate into diversified portfolios, ensuring sustainable long-term growth for both individuals and the broader economy.

What makes your robo-advisory and digital investment model distinct in terms of sophistication, adaptability, and ability to democratize access to global markets?
Most platforms offering global advisory are essentially index investing. Investors buy into funds that remain static until they choose to rebalance. Our approach is different. We provide active investment management with quarterly rebalancing, direct investment into securities rather than just funds, and tailored exposure to global markets through best-in-class ETFs recommended by our external CIO. This ensures investors can not only participate in the market but are also dynamically positioned as conditions evolve. It is a more sophisticated, forward-looking model that responds to the growing maturity of Saudi investors.

Looking toward 2026, what benchmarks will define success for BSF Capital?
In 2025, we expect our bottom line to grow by more than 50% on the back of our current activities. The launch of BSF Invest in 4Q2025 will add a significant new growth engine, with full functionality in place by 2026. Success will mean having established a trusted, diversified platform that attracts not only Saudi investors but also international capital. By 2026, we want to be recognized as a central player in expanding access to global financial markets from Saudi Arabia, contributing directly to Vision 2030's objectives of financial inclusion, savings growth, and economic diversification. ✖

BIO

With over 23 years of experience in banking and financial services, Salam AlKhunaizi has led the execution of several landmark transactions, including Saudi Aramco, the world's largest IPO, as well as Ma'aden and STC IPOs, and several other landmark transactions. Beyond his role as CEO, Alkhunaizi serves as a member of the Saudi Shura Council, a member of the board of BSF Capital, a member of the executive committee of Aljomaih Energy and Water Company Limited, and a member of the Capital Market Institutions Committee.

WEALTH *of opportunity*

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is spearheading the wholesale transformation into a knowledge economy through partnerships in sectors of long-term relevance.

THE SAUDI PUBLIC INVESTMENT FUND, or PIF, is a mainstay of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, and springboard for inbound and overseas investor capital, ranking among the world's foremost sovereign wealth funds (SWF). A vehicle of economic diversification, it has spearheaded the Kingdom's gigaprojects, schemes that establish value chains, generating employment for a skilled local workforce. Since 2021, PIF's investments in priority sectors are north of USD171 billion. And between 2021 and 2024, its cumulative real non-oil GDP contribution swelled to USD243 billion. PIF accounts for a staggering 10% of the KSA's non-oil economy; its cumulative real non-oil GDP contribution between 2021 and 2024 having swelled to USD243 billion.

Meanwhile, PIF's capacity to establish quality international relationships is matched by its operational integrity. PIF has been lauded for its governance, sustainability and resilience (GSR) performance, garnering a 96% print on Global SWF's 2024 GSR Scoreboard. In 2025, PIF came in joint-first globally among 200 sovereign investors, scoring 100%. In 2024, acknowledgment of PIF's robustness and sterling credit profile came from Moody's upgrade of PIF to Aa3 from A1, with "stable outlook," while Fitch affirmed the SWF's rating at A+, with stable outlook. These accolades underline PIF's credibility as anchor investor.

PIF's size renders it an economic barometer, increasing or decreasing its investment in sectors based on prevailing risk dynamics, with a preference for long-term sustainability and local job creation potential. Its investment portfolio decisions offer the foreign investor 20:20 vision regarding institutional sentiment. In 2024, PIF scaled the USD1-trillion barrier on the back of an 18% rise in assets under management to USD1.15 trillion. Yet, prudence prompted a shift in stance towards "solvency over scale" and "substance over show." In the geopolitical conjuncture, PIF's returns have been restructured, with a fine-tuning of capital deployment and debt. It has recently toned down higher-risk investments towards industrial ventures and notably healthcare; a sector of great promise including health tourism. Note here that having already surpassed the Vision 2030 target of 100 million tourists per year, the new target is reset at 150 million.

In 2024, PIF's diversified funding sources raised USD9.83 billion in public debt and USD7 billion in private debt. The General Authority for Statistics puts the volume of FDI inflows at USD6.4 billion in 1Q2025, up 24% from the same period of 2024. Faris I. AlGhannam, CEO & Board Member of HSBC Saudi Arabia, notes that while domestic investors tend toward tried-and-tested sectors, diversification is advancing because "sectors like renewables, electrification, tourism, and sports are drawing substantial foreign investment." Capital aside, local corporations and SMEs benefit from "strategic partners who bring expertise and global best practices."

By leveraging diversified funding sources PIF strategically expands the KSA's cultural brand and global positioning in step with the ongoing socio-economic transformation at home. Again, its success here is internationally confirmed in a study by valuation company Brand Finance, which labeled PIF the most valuable and fastest-growing brand in the world among all SWFs, awarding an A+ rating. Meanwhile, HSBC's Faris I. AlGhannam considers the KSA's international positioning vis-a-vis China's Belt and Road program, identifying a "complementarity between China and Saudi Arabia [where] China's industrial leadership and Initiative align well with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which focuses on economic diversification and global investment." More significantly, he concludes, "China leads in sectors where Saudi Arabia is becoming a key partner."

Saudi Arabia already hosts major international sporting and cultural events, while also investing in teams and infrastructure to build local capacity. The Sports Clubs Investment and Privatization Project kicked-off in June 2023, whereupon the four prominent Saudi clubs of Al-Hilal, Al-Nassr, Al-Ittihad, and Al-Ahli became companies. PIF's retained 75% stake ensures that operational performance remains onside.

To scale the Kingdom's position in global communications, specifically digital sports consumption, the PIF's sports arm, SURJ Sports Investment spent USD1 billion for a minority stake in international sports streaming platform DAZN. As a partner the Kingdom provides a financial cushion in a fiercely competitive business destined for consolidation. The deal is part of a wider joint venture to expand sports broadcasting across a content-hungry Middle East.

In summary, PIF underpins the Kingdom's transformation into a knowledge economy by advancing diversification, catalyzing FDI flows, and establishing local partnerships that deliver specialization in strategic sectors. ✖



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BIO

Faris I. AlGhannam has been the CEO and board member of HSBC Saudi Arabia since 2022. He is also a board member of HSBC Bank Egypt and an independent director of board and chairman of the audit committee of a leading pharmaceutical manufacturer in the MENA region, as well as an independent director of the board of a leading consumers company in the Kingdom and sits on the board of directors at Al-Tamayyuz Finance & Accounting Excellence Academy.

Faris I. AlGhannam
CEO & BOARD MEMBER,
HSBC SAUDI ARABIA

How is HSBC positioning itself as a key partner for companies entering the Saudi market and for those looking to expand internationally?

The perception of Saudi Arabia is shifting globally, and we see that firsthand. There is a growing attraction to the Kingdom, reflected not only in client interactions but also in measurable investment flows. The number of global clients requesting visits or engagements with Saudi entities continues to rise, with 2024 marking the third consecutive year of significant growth post-COVID-19. We have seen a 20% increase in hosted clients at flagship events like the Future Investment Initiative (FII) and the Capital Market Forum. These events, along with bilateral meetings and global forums in places like Hong Kong and London, help demonstrate Saudi Arabia's increasing relevance on the international stage.

HSBC's strength lies in its ability to combine international reach with local insight. How do its partnerships support this position?

Our entire presence in Saudi Arabia is rooted in partnership. HSBC is the largest shareholder in the Kingdom's fourth largest bank by assets, SAB, our commercial and retail banking partner, with which HSBC's relationship dates back more than 70 years. That foundational partnership is the cornerstone of our local operations. Beyond HSBC's position in the Kingdom, our approach to clients, whether sovereign entities, listed companies, or large conglomerates, is always long term. In capital markets, we work closely with the Tadawul Group and major institutional investors, including the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which is executing much of the vision investment agenda. For globally oriented companies, we provide access to international capital markets and advisory services. For national champions, we offer customized banking and financing solutions. We also support private-sector groups through advisory, financing, fund raising and structuring, and access to private and capital markets to new markets. ✖



BIO

Naif AbuSaida is the Founder of Hakbah, the revolutionary, decentralized savings platform permitted by the Saudi Central Bank for Savings. The company has over 1 million users, blue-chip partners (Tawuniya insurance, Flynas Airlines, Riyad Bank, and ANB) and is backed by the region's top investors like (Global Ventures, Venture Souq, Aditum Asset Management). He is also an advisor to the CEO of NEOM on marketing and communications, a role he has held since 2020, and is a board member of the Industrial Masterplan Fund and Qurtuba Real Estate Fund.

Naif AbuSaida
FOUNDER,
HAKBAH

Could you share the story behind the creation of Hakbah, and what inspired you to focus on alternative financial savings in Saudi Arabia?

The idea for Hakbah emerged when a friend shared his experience of borrowing money at high interest rates from a real estate office. This got me thinking about Islamic peer-to-peer lending as a viable alternative. As I refined the idea, I realized a more unique approach: focusing on "Jameya," the traditional savings group model. Ultimately, Hakbah was founded with the dual mission of being both profitable and socially impactful. We focus on short-term "save-to-spend" goals of one year or less because immediate rewards help build habits. Once users complete three savings cycles, they are usually hooked. One client saves consistently for rent payments each December. This approach has attracted new savers: 20% of our users are first-time savers, with 70% between 21-32 years old. Our platform serves underserved groups, including 4 million housewives with family income but no salary, 2 million freelancers, and 1.8 million university students.

What advantages do you offer over traditional methods?

What we offer goes beyond traditional methods, providing a legal framework, a variety of options, privacy, and the key social benefit of no embarrassment. For instance, if someone needs SAR20,000 for travel or rent, their options are typically borrowing from family, which can be embarrassing, or taking a microloan with high interest rates. With our social savings groups, users commit for a set period, say 10 months, and pay a joining fee far lower than alternatives. The relationship is among members, not with a lender. Each month, as the user makes payments, they are also helping others without losing their own money. If there are 10 members, each person receives their payout in turn, benefiting everyone. Our platform offers a marketplace of savings groups with flexible amounts and durations, from SAR300-5,000 monthly and terms ranging from four to 12 months. This flexibility lets users adjust the amount, duration, or start date to suit their needs. ✖

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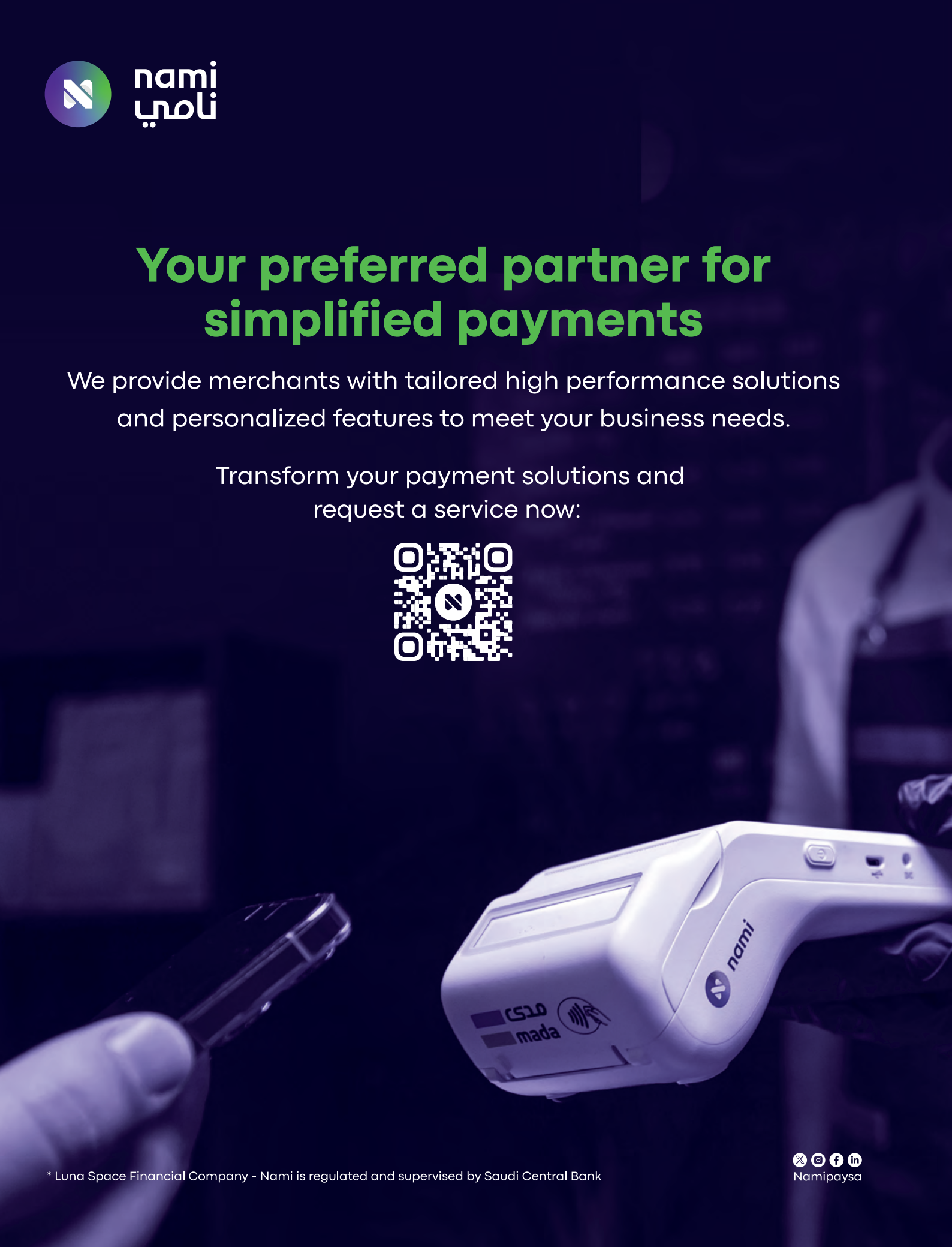
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LASTING *value*

From digital infrastructure and smart logistics to talent development, ewpartners is investing in the foundations of Saudi Arabia's connected, inclusive, and innovation-driven future.

Jessica Wong
FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER, EWPARTNERS

How does ewpartners' investment in digital infrastructure translate into tangible benefits for people in Saudi Arabia?

At ewpartners, we view digital infrastructure as the backbone of a modern economy, one that empowers individuals, accelerates innovation, and enhances quality of life. Our investments in cloud services, data centers, AI ecosystems, and smart connectivity are designed not only to serve businesses, but also to create lasting value for citizens. Through our portfolio companies and strategic partnerships, we have helped build a more connected digital landscape that supports e-commerce, fintech, and smart-city solutions. For instance, Saudi Cloud Computing Company (SCCC), our portfolio company jointly developed with Alibaba Cloud and STC, is enabling the Kingdom's next-generation digital backbone, from localized cloud and AI services to initiatives such as the City Brain program, which applies real-time data intelligence to improve urban traffic flow and municipal management. Meanwhile, Sahm Capital, a leading fintech-driven financial company in the Kingdom licensed by the Capital Market Authority, has attracted over one million users in its inaugural year by making access to domestic and global markets faster and more inclusive. Its platform expands financial literacy and participation, allowing everyday investors to seamlessly trade and build wealth in a transparent environment. Together, these initiatives illustrate how ewpartners' digital-infrastructure investments bridge technology with opportunity, ensuring that citizens experience the tangible benefits of connectivity through smarter cities, faster access to services, and a more inclusive digital economy aligned with Vision 2030.

ewpartners has invested heavily in logistics and localization. How has this improved everyday life in the Kingdom?

Logistics and localization lie at the core of Saudi Arabia's transformation into a global trade and innovation hub. At ewpartners, we focus on building sustainable supply-chain infrastructure that strengthens domestic capacity while positioning the Kingdom as a key node between Asia, Europe, and Africa. Through projects such as J&T Express Middle East, Leshines (the supply chain solution provider of Lenovo Group), and the KSA-China Special Economic Zone at King Salman International Airport, we are helping bring high-quality products from around the world closer to Saudi consumers faster, cheaper, and more efficiently. Innovative platforms like btr.tech are taking this further by making logistics smarter and more connected, integrating automation, robotics, and digital management tools to streamline everything from warehousing to last-mile delivery. For everyday consumers, this translates into quicker deliveries, better prices, and more choices. For Saudi businesses, it means stronger local supply chains, reduced import dependency, and new export potential. Most importantly, our partnerships are creating skilled Saudi jobs, turning logistics from a background enabler into a visible, people-centered driver of daily convenience and national competitiveness.

How is ewpartners helping to build human capital and professional capability within Saudi Arabia?

People are at the heart of every successful transformation, and developing local talent is one of ewpartners' key commitments. Across our portfolio, we invest in the skills that will define the Kingdom's next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. We collaborate with universities, training institutes, and national initiatives to design programs aligned with future market needs, including internships and workshops in AI, finance, and entrepreneurship. Through Saudi universities' Cooperative Training Programs, we help students gain practical experience in finance, technology, and cross-border business. We also work with the Misk Foundation and the Saudi Media Academy to connect Saudi youth with global innovation ecosystems and accelerate talent growth in digital and creative industries. Within ewpartners, female professionals hold leadership roles at every level, and we continue to build a professional, international environment for young Saudi nationals to grow and lead. Our investments have created over 10,000 jobs across key sectors, empowering people to sustain the Kingdom's transformation for decades to come. ✖

BIO

Jessica Wong is the Founder & Managing Partner of ewpartners, the first cross-border investment platform rooted in Saudi Arabia. As the region' s first female investor from Asia, she has led landmark transactions, including SCCC's hyperscale cloud joint venture with Alibaba and STC, as well as ACES and J&T KSA, and became the first woman to serve on their boards. Earlier in her career, while co-managing India-focused venture capital funds, she built a portfolio of unicorns and achieved exits with returns over 20 times.

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CULTURAL

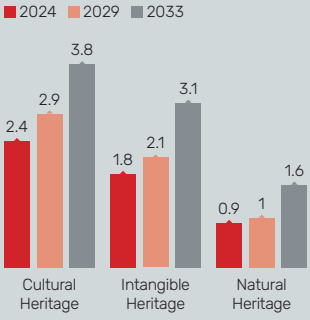
Al-Ahsa Oasis, an Evolving Cultural Landscape (2018)
At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah (2010)
Hegra Archaeological Site (Al-Hijr / Madāin Sālih) (2008)
Himā Cultural Area (2021)
Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah (2014)
Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia (2015)
The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area (2024)

NATURAL

'Uruq Bani Ma'arid (2023)

SAUDI ARABIA HERITAGE TOURISM MARKET (USD BN)

SOURCE: GRAND VIEW RESEARCH



HERITAGE TOURISM MARKET SHARE BY BOOKING METHOD (2024)

SOURCE: GRAND VIEW RESEARCH





Image: Diriyah

CULTURE & HERITAGE REIMAGINED: Reviving the Past, Shaping the Future

TRADITION *Reimagined*

Saudi Arabia's cultural renaissance is emerging as one of the most compelling engines of its economic diversification under Vision 2030. The Kingdom is investing in culture not only as a pillar of national identity but also as a powerful driver of tourism, creative industries, and soft power. By reimagining heritage and embracing innovation, Saudi Arabia is transforming culture into an investable asset, creating opportunities across the value chain, from fine art and gastronomy to logistics, preservation, and placemaking.

Dina Amin, CEO of the Visual Arts Commission, underscores that "we are not just enabling artistic expression today, but future-proofing it for the next generation." Under her leadership, Saudi visual arts have been positioned as a competitive global force via residencies such as Intermix, flagship events like Art Week Riyadh, and international showcases from the Venice Biennale to cross-border collaborations. These platforms are nurturing talent, expanding markets for Saudi artists, and enhancing the Kingdom's cultural brand on the world stage.

The art market's maturation is mirrored by the entry of global players. Nour Kelani, Managing Director of Christie's KSA, highlights that the number of Saudi bidders and buyers has surged by 150% since 2019, with collectors becoming more informed and globally connected. Christie's expansion, alongside institutions such as the Visual Arts Commission and private galleries, is helping to deepen market sophistication and link local talent to international collectors and museums.

Behind the scenes, the infrastructure enabling this cultural boom is equally transformative. Paul Williamson, CEO of Constantine KSA, has built a fully integrated fine-art logistics and consultancy platform that supports landmark projects from Desert X AlUla to Noor Riyadh. By combining global expertise with local capacity building, Constantine is elevating the technical standards of conservation, transport, and installation, essential foundations for a thriving cultural economy.

Culinary heritage is another powerful vector of Saudi Arabia's soft power. Mayada Badr, CEO of the Culinary Arts Commission, has spearheaded efforts to document the Kingdom's diverse food traditions, elevate culinary professions, and promote Saudi flavors on the global stage. From heritage restaurant licensing and immersive culinary tours to bold international showcases such as Saudi coffee at Nespresso in Italy and regional lamb dishes at Expo Japan, the sector is translating tradition into memorable cultural experiences and new business opportunities for chefs, producers, and investors.

Cultural assets groups, preservation institutes, and creative hubs like Art Jameel are contributing to this ecosystem, while signature events such as Noor Riyadh and the rise of contemporary Saudi artists like Nasser Al Salem highlight how heritage-inspired creativity is shaping global perceptions. ✖



THE NEW *aesthetic*

Aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, the Visual Arts Commission is responsible for developing the visual arts sector, supporting artists, and building a thriving creative ecosystem.

Dina Amin
CEO,
VISUAL ARTS COMMISSION

What strategic pillars guide the Visual Arts Commission's efforts to establish a competitive and sustainable visual arts ecosystem in Saudi Arabia?

We are at a privileged moment in Saudi Arabia's cultural journey. The establishment of the Ministry of Culture and its commissions marks a pivotal point in developing a rich and diverse landscape. As one of 11 cultural commissions, the Visual Arts Commission is focused on laying down the foundational infrastructure that celebrates our artistic heritage while promoting capacity building and sustainability. We are working across the ecosystem taking into consideration all the many stakeholders and entities needed in a flourishing visual arts ecosystem, from artists to curators, educators, writers, commercial galleries amongst others. Our mission is to ensure that the language of Saudi visual arts is not only heard domestically but also firmly embedded in the global canon of art history. Importantly, our focus is long term: we are not just enabling artistic expression today, but future-proofing it for the next generation through systems of support that can adapt to technological and societal shifts.

What mechanisms are in place to connect Saudi artists, institutions, and audiences to global cultural networks?

We focus on breaking down barriers and democratizing access to the arts. Our work spans informal education and knowledge transfer opportunities, talent development, and facilitating access to resources through publications. We are building platforms that provide visibility and accessibility, from grassroots workshops to international exhibitions. Our Intermix residency program, for instance, brings together artists and curators from both Saudi Arabia and around the world. It is a space of intellectual and artistic exchange. It is not simply about producing art but fostering relationships, mutual learning, and cultural dialogue. These exchanges help artists challenge their assumptions and expand their creative vocabulary while embedding Saudi art into global conversations. These residencies have hosted participants from countries as far as Japan and Mexico, creating a cross-pollination of perspectives that enriches the local ecosystem.

How does the commission leverage the demographic dividend to cultivate a new generation of cultural contributors and consumers?

Youth engagement is crucial. In 2021, we launched our first major event focused on new media and NFTs, which drew participation from artists, technologists, collectors, and curious members of the public. This was during the height of the global conversation on digital assets and creativity. It confirmed a hunger for experimental, cross-disciplinary engagement. Our programs have grown steadily. In 2024, we received more than 500 applications for 45 Intermix residency spots, a 70% increase from the year before. These represent young creatives who are actively shaping the narrative of Saudi art. Similarly, the Kingdom Photography Award has become a national touchpoint. It includes both commissioned professionals and open calls for amateurs. In its latest edition, we received over 6,000 submissions, and 30 emerging photographers were selected, by a jury, for an exhibition alongside professionals, providing both visibility and the opportunity to engage in micro-residencies with mentorship by established figures in the field. The interest we have seen among youth affirms that this sector is not only alive but on the verge of significant transformation.

How do these initiatives feed into Saudi Arabia's broader cultural economy and its future growth?

The impact is multifaceted. We generate employment opportunities for the practitioners within the creative economy ranging from artists to curators, to writers, and art technicians, while also creating downstream effects in tourism, education, and hospitality. By institutionalizing platforms like Art Week Riyadh and our residency programs, we provide continuity and reliability, factors that are essential for building investor confidence in the creative economy. Cultural production becomes cultural capital. When a Saudi artist exhibits locally or internationally, or when a local exhibition draws global attention, it uplifts the entire ecosystem. These cultural milestones enhance our global presence and deepen international cultural dialogue. More tangibly, we see increasing interest from private collectors, corporate sponsors, and foreign institutions looking to engage with Saudi creatives. ✖

BIO

Dina Amin has served as CEO of the Saudi Visual Arts Commission since 2020, where she leads the strategic development of Saudi Arabia's visual arts sector. A respected specialist in contemporary visual arts, with more than two decades of international experience, she has held senior leadership roles at leading auction houses: notably as a Senior Director at Phillips, and through key appointments across New York, Dubai, and London with Christie's. Since her appointment, Amin has spearheaded major strategic initiatives that anchors Saudi Arabia's visual arts sector domestically and internationally.



ARTISTIC *legacies*

Since its launch four years ago, the Noor Riyadh Festival has welcomed over 5 million visitors and showcased the works of hundreds of artists from Saudi Arabia and abroad.

Nouf AlMoneef
DIRECTOR,
NOOR RIYADH FESTIVAL

What inspired the creation of Noor Riyadh, and how has it evolved since its launch?
Launched in 2021, Noor Riyadh's first edition was deeply inspired by the rich heritage and contemporary potential of light art, aiming specifically to enhance creativity and educate the public about contemporary and public art. It was created as a central part of the broader Riyadh Art initiative launched in 2019 by King Salman and His Royal Highness, with the ambitious goal of transforming Riyadh into one of the world's most livable cities in alignment with Vision 2030. Featuring an array of stunning artworks by internationally acclaimed and emerging Saudi artists, Noor Riyadh quickly became a major cultural event. In the last few years, the festival has dramatically grown in scope and impact, evolving into the world's largest light art festival. It offers an expansive range of public programs including workshops, artist talks, performances, and educational sessions, thus significantly enriching Riyadh's cultural and creative landscape.

What has driven the festival's rapid international recognition?
Noor Riyadh stands apart internationally due to its dual emphasis on nurturing both local Saudi artists and internationally renowned creatives. Unlike many other festivals that primarily employ designers for visual projections, Noor Riyadh uniquely collaborates directly with contemporary artists to present an extensive range of artistic expressions, including digital art, immersive and interactive installations, and monumental sculptures. This distinctive approach not only enriches the artistic diversity of the festival but also actively contributes to the global recognition and prestige of Noor Riyadh within the international arts community.

How do you approach balancing renowned international artists with emerging Saudi talent?
To effectively balance local and international talent, we adopt a strategic curatorial approach by pairing Saudi curators with international counterparts annually. This deliberate strategy fosters dynamic dialogue and exchange, integrating distinct artistic visions and cultural perspectives. A significant proportion, over 30%, of our artists are Saudi, reinforcing our commitment to promoting local creativity while simultaneously providing Saudi artists the invaluable opportunity to showcase their work alongside globally recognized figures.

How has Noor Riyadh has engaged the local community and shifted public perceptions of contemporary art?
Community engagement lies at the heart of Noor Riyadh's mission. We implement extensive public programming designed to make contemporary art accessible and engaging for diverse audiences. This includes workshops, artist-led discussions, performances, and especially the Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program, which annually selects 10 graduates or students to gain hands-on experience directly from senior management and established artists. Through this apprenticeship, participants engage deeply with the festival's creative processes from inception to execution, fostering an intimate understanding and appreciation of contemporary art. Strategic choices of accessible and loved public spaces such as Wadi Hanifa, Al-Murabba, and JAX further ensure broad community engagement, attracting not only art enthusiasts but also families and first-time visitors. Locations are selected deliberately to intersect with areas frequented by the local population, making art an integral part of daily community life and accessible to a wide-ranging demographic.

Beyond tourism, how does Noor Riyadh contribute to the creative economy and job creation in the Kingdom?
Noor Riyadh makes a significant contribution to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification by fostering the local creative economy. It generates employment opportunities particularly among youth through direct jobs, volunteering initiatives, and specialized training programs. Additionally, the festival stimulates collaborations and economic activity among artists, designers, and local businesses, solidifying the cultural and economic vibrancy of Riyadh.

How does the festival align with Riyadh Art's vision of transforming the city into an open-air gallery, and are there ambitions for more permanent installations?
Noor Riyadh directly aligns with Riyadh Art's broader vision to transform Riyadh into an extensive open-air gallery featuring over a thousand permanent public artworks. We have already successfully implemented permanent installations, notably Star in Motion atop the Kingdom Tower and Zaman Al-Jasim's work at Qasr Al-Hukm metro station, which underscore our ongoing commitment to integrating lasting artistic legacies into Riyadh's urban fabric. ✖

BIO

Nouf AlMoneef is an interior architect, senior member of the Riyadh Art team, and the Director of the Noor Riyadh festival, now in its fifth year. Holding a master's degree in fine arts from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, she founded her own design studio early in her career and became actively involved in managing major entertainment and sporting events across Saudi Arabia. She is also passionate about fashion and acclaimed style. Her global experiences, including time spent in the US and Europe, have shaped her creative vision, which she applies to both architecture and luxury events.



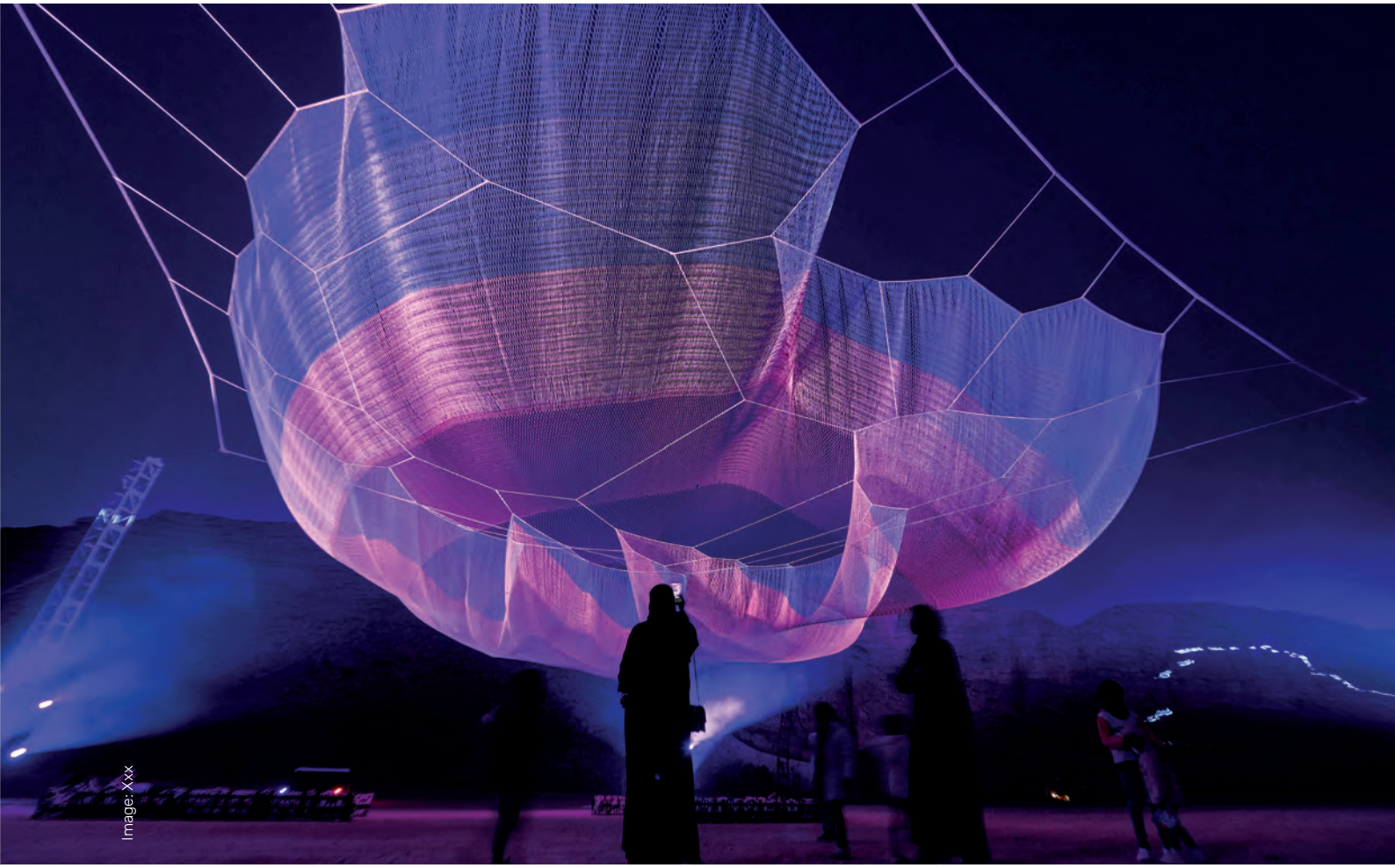
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LIGHT *it up*

The world-class Noor Riyadh festival transforms the Saudi capital into a dazzling display of light and performance, bridging culture and history with modern technology and Saudi creatives with the international art community.

RIYADH, the beating heart of Saudi Arabia, is undergoing a revolutionary transformation that is seeing the desert capital become a blossoming hub for artistic and cultural festivals. Riyadh Art, one of Riyadh's four megaprojects launched by King Salman bin Abdulaziz in March 2019, is yet another Vision 2030 initiative set to diversify the country's economy and attract fresh new visitors and foreign investment. The public art project turns Riyadh into a veritable open-air art gallery, installing more than 1,000 artworks and landmarks created by local and international artists across the city's public spaces. Annual events are also bringing creative experiences to Riyadh, and one of the most notable among these is Noor Riyadh, the world's largest light art festival.

Launched in 2021, Noor Riyadh transforms Saudi Arabia's capital city into a luminous playground for artists and art enthusiasts alike. Artworks are installed across multiple sites in Riyadh, including urban landmarks, public parks, heritage locations, and natural landscapes such as Wadi Hanifa and the King Abdulaziz Historical Center. The first edition was inspired by the Kingdom's rich heritage and the contemporary potential of light art. Featuring an array of vibrant artworks by internationally acclaimed and emerging Saudi artists, it quickly became a major cultural event. While the first edition set the Guinness World Records for largest LED structure and brightest suspended ornament, the 2022 event set even more, including largest light art festival, featuring 190 artworks by 130 artists across 40 locations, most drones performing an aerial dance display; and both longest distance and largest area covered by a laser light show. Today, the festival offers an expansive range of public programs including workshops, artist talks, performances, and educational sessions, significantly enriching Riyadh's cultural and


Image: Xxx

creative landscape.

Nouf Al Moneef, director of Noor Riyadh told TBY that to "effectively balance local and international talent, we adopt a strategic curatorial approach by pairing Saudi curators with international counterparts annually. This deliberate strategy fosters dynamic dialogue and exchange, integrating distinct artistic visions and cultural perspectives." Nearly a third of Noor's artists are Saudi, reinforcing the Kingdom's commitment to promoting local creativity while also providing Saudi artists an opportunity to showcase their work alongside globally recognized figures. Furthermore, Noor Riyadh implements extensive public programming, including workshops, lectures, and performances, designed to make contemporary art accessible and engaging for diverse audiences. The Noor Riyadh Apprenticeship Program is exceptionally valuable in this regard, as each year 10 graduates or students are selected to gain hands-on experience directly from senior management and established artists. "Noor Riyadh makes a significant contribution to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification by fostering the local creative economy," continued Al Moneef. "It generates employment opportunities particularly among youth through direct jobs, volunteering initiatives, and specialized training programs."

The event takes place over several weeks each year, and while the inaugural event took place in March-April, subsequent events have taken place in the cooler months of November and December. The 2025 edition took place from 20 November to 6 December under the theme "In the Blink of an Eye." Curated by Mami Kataoka, Sara Almutlaq, and Li Zhenhua, it featured interactive installations and technology-driven artworks across six locations in Riyadh, including illuminations along its newly inaugurated metro lines.

The fifth edition of the festival was designed to celebrate Riyadh's rapid urban transformation, reflecting the city's evolving identity, which juxtaposes its historic legacy with modern day innovation and infrastructure. As stated on the official website, the festival "invites visitors on a journey between eras, a place where tradition meets transformation. It is a metaphor for Riyadh's broader trajectory: honoring the past while fearlessly looking ahead." Over 60 large-scale light installations were realized, building on the success of previous editions and reaffirming its status as a leading platform for contemporary public art. "Every new edition of Noor Riyadh brings unique excitement, driven by fresh themes, innovative artistic challenges, and the collaborative journey itself, especially working with passionate teams dedicated to bringing artistic visions to life," said Al Moneef. "Ultimately, we envision Noor Riyadh solidifying Riyadh's identity as a major global cultural hub, connecting diverse communities through the universal language of art."

All events are free and open to the public. ✖



NEW ERA *of art*

Christie's in Saudi Arabia has positioned itself as long-term cultural and commercial partner in the Kingdom's creative economy.

Nour Kelani
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CHRISTIE'S SAUDI ARABIA

What were the driving factors behind Christie's expansion into Saudi Arabia?
Christie's expansion into Saudi Arabia stems from the Kingdom's accelerated cultural and economic diversification under Vision 2030. With substantial investments in arts, heritage, and tourism, the country has established a fertile environment for the growth of a robust creative economy. Christie's leadership identified this momentum as a strategic inflection point, leading to the acquisition of a commercial license in 2024. The Kingdom's young population has played a critical role in shaping this demand. Between 2019 and 2024, the total number of bidders and buyers from Saudi Arabia grew by 76%, while total new Saudi buyers increased by 100%, and new bidders and buyers combined grew by 150%. These indicators underscore not only increased interest, but a sustained engagement that reflects the maturing of the local art market.

How does Christie's plan to nurture and grow a sophisticated collector base in the Kingdom?
Saudi Arabia represents one of the most dynamic emerging markets for art and luxury, and Christie's is committed to cultivating a new generation of sophisticated collectors. In 2025, we were honored to serve as a programming partner for the Islamic Arts Biennale and collaborated with the inaugural Riyadh Art Week, two landmark events that connected global expertise with local creativity. Additionally, our online auction of Modern and Contemporary Middle Eastern Art included 12 works by Saudi artists, two of which were entirely new to the market. This inclusion signals growing institutional and private confidence in Saudi artistry. We aim to broaden exposure, improve access, and nurture connoisseurship by combining educational outreach, curated previews, and bespoke advisory services that span the spectrum, from jewelry and horology to contemporary and Old Master paintings.

How do you balance attracting seasoned collectors with cultivating first-time buyers, particularly in a growing market like Saudi Arabia?
Christie's approach is rooted in personalization and inclusivity. For seasoned collectors, we offer tailored advisory services, access to off-market works through our private sales division, and opportunities to participate in globally significant auctions. For new entrants, particularly the Kingdom's younger demographic, we focus on educational programming, curated exhibitions, and immersive experiences that demystify the world of collecting. This demographic seeks authenticity, transparency, and meaning in acquisitions. We are committed to making the art world more accessible and enriching for them by creating emotional connections and long-term relationships.

With increasing competition, how does Christie's maintain its competitive edge in the Middle East?
Christie's continues to lead through a fusion of global excellence and regional agility. Our unique advantage lies in our ability to pair unrivaled international expertise with a nuanced understanding of regional dynamics. This is reinforced by our deep partnerships with institutions, our ongoing presence at art fairs and Biennales, and our long-established client relationships throughout the Gulf. We bring top-tier works and global visibility to local audiences, and endeavor to make the art world accessible, whether through auctions, private sales, exhibitions, or bespoke client experiences. Our advisory services, client education, and ability to curate high-impact collaborations make Christie's not just a marketplace, but a cultural partner of reference.

Looking ahead, what does success look like for Christie's in 2025 and beyond in Saudi Arabia?
For Christie's, success in Saudi Arabia is defined by impact, longevity, and relevance. In 2025, we are focused on deepening our educational programming, expanding our regional footprint, and further developing partnerships with Saudi institutions with in the arts ecosystem. We are working to further increase access to private sales services, and continue investing in local talent as we further build our team. Our global private sales division, which grew internationally by 41% YoY in 2024 to represent 27% of global sales (USD1.5 billion), will be a key growth engine in the Kingdom as we support discreet, high-value transactions. We are also committed to showcasing fresh-to-market works, especially in the field of modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art and amplifying Saudi narratives through our global platforms. ✖

BIO

Nour Kelani was appointed managing director of Christie's Saudi Arabia in 2024, overseeing the expansion of the fine art and luxury auction house into the Kingdom. Known for her experience and contributions in the Saudi arts and culture sector, she previously oversaw operations at Ayyam Gallery in Jeddah. She has been a keen supporter of the evolving contemporary art scene in the Kingdom through diplomatic cultural missions. Nour has also managed her own art and luxury consultancy. She has been honored by France with the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres as a patron in the arts with extensive networks among Saudi and regional artists. She studied international relations and also holds roles in several humanitarian organizations.



ART *for all*

Art Jameel serves as a key catalyst in Saudi Arabia's cultural renaissance by democratizing access to the arts, nurturing local talent, and building a dynamic ecosystem to fuel the growing creative economy.

Antonia Carver
DIRECTOR,
ART JAMEEL

How is Art Jameel positioned to accelerate Saudi Arabia's ongoing cultural renaissance?
The term "renaissance" perfectly captures what has been unfolding in Saudi Arabia over the past decade. We are witnessing a seismic shift in how the Kingdom perceives its place on the global stage and the role of culture within that narrative. This transformation stems from a combination of top-down initiatives, particularly through the Ministry of Culture, and a grassroots surge of activity from artists, filmmakers, theater managers, and other creative practitioners. At Art Jameel, we see ourselves as part of this third pillar: the private and philanthropic sector, complementing government and commercial efforts. Although the sector is still nascent, Art Jameel stands out as one of the few large-scale cultural foundations in the country, currently operating the only public arts center of this scale. The groundwork is solid; new generations are emerging, eager to pursue careers in creative industries, and the community's enthusiasm is palpable. All the essential ingredients are in place to build a robust cultural ecosystem, and the momentum continues to grow.

What strategies have you adopted to cultivate a deeply engaged cultural community?
Jeddah offers a unique advantage, with a cosmopolitan population that has long been curious and engaged with cultural initiatives. Even so, many of our visitors are experiencing a museum for the first time when they enter Hayy Jameel. Our philosophy is that the arts must be democratic and accessible to all; therefore, entrance to our exhibitions is free. We see repeat visitors who spend considerable time engaging with the artworks, longer than typical audiences in our London or Dubai centers. Our strategy involves offering diverse experiences: exhibitions, film screenings, markets, restaurants, cafes, language classes, and cultural festivals. This cross-pollination draws audiences in through one interest and introduces them to new cultural experiences. Events such as our Ramadan cultural festival or the Japanese film festival regularly reach capacity, demonstrating the immense appetite for cultural experiences. Hayy Jameel also pioneered art house cinema in Saudi Arabia, launching the country's first independent cinema in 2022. This cinema has quickly become a hub for film lovers, offering everything from Arab classics to international indie films, alongside training programs and short film competitions. By cultivating an audience that is both curious and discerning, we have contributed to the development of a cultural ecosystem that blends tradition with modernity.

How is Art Jameel aligning its initiatives with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 agenda?
Art Jameel directly contributes to Vision 2030 by nurturing creative industries, creating spaces for cultural production, and attracting both local and international audiences. Beyond the economic benefits, these initiatives build a society that expresses itself, shares knowledge, and strengthens community ties. Our learning programs span all ages, from early childhood education to lifelong learning. They include workshops, classes, and hands-on experiences in everything from fashion design to filmmaking. This non-formal education fills a critical gap in the cultural landscape and empowers individuals to develop the soft skills necessary for the future. Cultural sector is not merely an economic contributor but a social catalyst, fostering innovation, tolerance, and creativity, all critical pillars of Vision 2030.

How do you ensure that Art Jameel acts as a true incubator for talent and innovation within the creative economy?
We are committed to creating pipelines for talent development. Our mentorship programs pair emerging artists with experienced practitioners, enabling the transfer of knowledge and skills. Residencies, workshops, and collaborative projects encourage experimentation and innovation. For example, our songwriting labs have empowered young musicians to hone their craft and find their voice, while our film training initiatives have already produced several award-winning short films. We also provide artists with resources, both physical and intellectual, that allow them to move beyond conceptualization into production and presentation. This holistic approach ensures that creativity does not remain an abstract ideal but translates into tangible outputs that contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of the Kingdom. ✖

BIO

Antonia Carver leads the Art Jameel teams in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, overseeing programs across the arts, heritage and education. She joined in 2016 with a mandate to develop the Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, and Hayy Jameel, Jeddah, and institute a period of radical growth for the organization. Among other roles, she was previously director of Art Dubai (2010–2016) and projects director at Bidoun. She has written extensively on Middle Eastern art and film.



REDEFINING *calligraphy for a new Saudi era*

Blending sacred tradition with contemporary expression, Saudi artist Nasser Al Salem transforms classical calligraphy into a global dialogue on culture, identity, and the Kingdom's evolving creative spirit under Vision 2030.

Nasser Al Salem
CONTEMPORARY CALLIGRAPHER & ARTIST

IN THE DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE of Saudi Arabia's cultural renaissance, few artists embody the dialogue between heritage and modernity as profoundly as Nasser Al Salem. Trained as an architect and holding an Ijāzah in classical Arabic calligraphy, Al Salem has transformed the traditional art of script into a conceptual medium that bridges sacred heritage with contemporary expression. His practice exemplifies the new cultural spirit emerging in the Kingdom under Vision 2030, positioning Saudi art as both a local treasure and a global voice.

"Calligraphy is not just about letters," Al Salem reflects. "It is about how a single stroke can transform a blank page into something meaningful and valuable. That philosophy shapes my entire approach to art." This conviction, rooted in a decade of study under a master calligrapher at the Holy Mosque in Makkah, informs his vision of calligraphy as a structural language, one that can shape space, provoke dialogue, and transcend cultural boundaries.

FROM MECCA TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

Al Salem's early fascination with sacred architecture and the visual power of the written word has driven a practice that reimagines the spatial and symbolic dimensions of calligraphy. His installations often explore the intersection of language, geometry, and spirituality, exemplified by his work for the Islamic Biennale, in which he recreated the exact dimensions of the Kaaba. "I wanted to allow people outside the Haram to experience its scale and presence," he explains. "Understanding the proportions and form brings a deeper awareness of its meaning." His art has garnered international acclaim, with exhibitions at institutions such as the British Museum, LACMA, Art Jameel, and at landmark events including Desert X AlUla, the Diriyah Biennale.

These platforms, he says, are pivotal in positioning Saudi art within the global cultural conversation. "Exhibiting abroad demonstrates that our culture is not isolated. It intersects with others and contributes to universal dialogues."

SHAPING THE NEW CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM

Al Salem's rise coincides with the transformative cultural policies of Vision 2030, which have fostered a surge of investment in arts, institutions, and creative infrastructure. Riyadh, once a modest participant in the arts, is now an international hub for exhibitions, biennales, and public art programs. "The change has been extraordinary," Al Salem notes. "For an artist, the infrastructure and opportunities available today are unprecedented."

Yet, he emphasizes that education and support structures remain critical to sustaining this momentum. "A teacher does more than teach technique:

they expand your vision," he says, recalling his own formative years in calligraphy. "Saudi Arabia needs more art schools, greater access to museums, and structured programs for emerging artists. This foundation will nurture talent and accelerate growth."

COLLECTIVE ACTION & PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Beyond his personal practice, Al Salem has been a champion of collaborative initiatives. As co-founder of the Al Hangar artist collective in Jeddah, he has fostered an environment for experimentation and exchange. "Working collectively allows artists to share ideas and challenge each other outside the framework of galleries and curators," he says. "It is about conversation, mutual learning, and originality."

He also sees an essential role for private collectors and corporate patrons in bolstering the sector. "Government initiatives have provided crucial platforms, but artists also need material support and opportunities to exhibit. Collectors and businesses can make a decisive difference by acquiring works, sponsoring exhibitions, and supporting residencies. This collective effort will ensure that the cultural momentum we see today becomes a lasting legacy."

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

With Saudi Arabia's art scene rapidly expanding, Al Salem remains focused on projects that blend cultural heritage with contemporary ideas. His upcoming schedule includes a solo show at Art Basel in Qatar and participation in Frieze London and Paris+ par Art Basel, with plans for a major museum exhibition in the near future. These endeavors reflect his continuing commitment to positioning Saudi art as a vibrant contributor. For Al Salem, the mission is clear: "Our tradition is a source of inspiration, not limitation. By engaging with it thoughtfully, we can create art that speaks to the present and resonates globally."

A BRIDGE BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE

Nasser Al Salem's journey, from his early studies in Makkah to international recognition, mirrors the broader trajectory of Saudi Arabia's cultural evolution. His work, rooted in calligraphy yet unbound by convention, exemplifies the Kingdom's aspirations to honor its heritage while embracing innovation. As Saudi Arabia continues to invest in culture as a cornerstone of its national transformation, artists like Al Salem demonstrate how tradition can become a powerful engine for contemporary creativity and global engagement. ✖

BIO

Born in Mecca in 1984, contemporary calligrapher and architect Nasser Al Salem reimagines traditional Arabic calligraphy through experimental, conceptual, and mixed-media forms. Trained in classical calligraphy yet educated in architecture at Umm Al-Qura University, he fuses both disciplines to explore the relationship between word, form, and meaning. His work is deeply rooted in spirituality, yet universal in message and has been exhibited globally, including at the British Museum, Venice Biennale, Louvre Abu Dhabi, and Delfina Foundation, and features in major collections such as the British Museum, LACMA, and Centre Pompidou.





Susan Alyahya
CEO,
ROYAL INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL ARTS (WRTH)

BIO

Suzan Alyahya is an accomplished leader in arts and culture. She was instrumental in developing the Wrth mandate and ensuring the successful completion of the initiation and design phases, later assuming the position of CEO in 2021. Before her involvement with the Ministry of Culture on the Wrth project, she was vice dean of the college of arts and design and director of partnerships and development at Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU).

How do you define Wrth's role in Saudi Arabia's national cultural renaissance?

Since its establishment within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030, Wrth has worked to represent the culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by narrating its artistic history, telling the stories of traditional arts, and sharing the experiences of the artists who have preserved this heritage. It also strives to safeguard the authenticity of these arts while encouraging enthusiasts to learn, master, and develop them in ways that ensure their continuity and renewal. The institute's mission is centered on strengthening national identity through enriching and promoting traditional arts, while fostering and training talents through specialized educational programs that meet their aspirations. It also values and recognizes living treasures and distinguished figures in this field by honoring them, providing incentives, and offering financial support to sustain and showcase their work.

The Year of Handicrafts 2025 has placed a national spotlight on artisanal heritage. How is Wrth leveraging this momentum to expand awareness, increase participation, and build commercial opportunities for Saudi artisans?

In alignment with the Year of Handicrafts 2025, the Institute is advancing iconic crafts such as Al-Sadu weaving, Al-Qatt Al-Asiri, Al-Ahsa bisht weaving, and traditional wood, metal, and pottery work through specialized programs, research, and documentation. As part of this national celebration, Wrth has launched Wrth Community, a platform that integrates education, handicrafts, entrepreneurship, and dialogue, fostering creativity, innovation, and skill development. In the first quarter alone, Wrth delivered 30 community workshops, 50 cultural events with over 100,000 visitors, and took part in 20 local and international forums. These efforts reflect the institute's commitment to raising awareness, empowering artisans, and positioning Saudi traditional arts as both a cultural treasure and a driver of the creative economy. ✖





TANGIBLE *opportunities*

Saudi Artisanal Company is transforming Saudi heritage into a viable economic and cultural force by empowering artisans and integrating traditional crafts into modern commerce.

Ibrahem Alnasir
CEO,
SAUDI ARTISANAL COMPANY

How do you define your mandate today within the Kingdom's broader cultural transformation?
Saudi Artisanal Company was established with two core objectives: to empower artisans across Saudi regions and to elevate the visibility and commercial viability of their products. Historically, Saudi artisanal products lacked proper representation in key venues such as airports, hotels, and cultural destinations. Yet, we have an abundance of talent and artisans that only needed structured support to reach its audience. We act as the commercial engine within a larger national ecosystem that includes the Ministry of Culture as the enabler, the Heritage Commission as the regulator and awareness, and the Royal Institute of Traditional Arts, which builds skills among artisans. Our role is to translate these collective efforts into tangible market opportunities through access to business, training, and distribution channels.

How do partnerships help the company integrate Saudi heritage into major projects and elevate the visibility of local crafts?
Our business model revolves around four pillars: B2G, B2B, B2C, and wholesale. We are actively engaged with government entities, private companies, and retail consumers through our stores and online platforms. On the wholesale side, we have partnerships with Amazon, the chefz, Jahez, and Floward, and we are expanding internationally. We recently finalized an agreement with many hotels to feature Saudi artisanal products within their properties. We also work with the Fashion Commission and are exploring cross-selling opportunities with Kayanee, which focuses on wellness and fashion under the PIF umbrella.

The Ministry of Culture recently launched an online platform to unify handicraft-related services. How is Saudi Artisanal Company leveraging this platform?
We worked closely with the ministry to ensure the integration of e-commerce, licensing, and training under one digital ecosystem. Initially, multiple agencies were attempting to sell or promote artisanal products independently, which fragmented the market. We created a governance model to clarify each stakeholder's role and aggregated all digital platforms under our umbrella. The Ministry of Culture supports our campaigns, but transactions and logistics flow through our system. This alignment has streamlined the user experience for artisans and consumers alike, ensuring consistency and efficiency.

Reinventing tradition through innovation is a delicate balance. How are you introducing innovation without diluting authenticity?
Our approach is data-driven. We conduct consumer behavior analysis to understand what today's market desires, and we align our supply accordingly. We are no longer providing artisanal products simply because they exist; we are curating experiences that tell stories. Every product must carry meaning and relevance to the buyer. For example, innovation also applies to how we present our products. We are exploring experiential retail concepts, such as "scented experiences" inspired by Saudi regions, allowing customers to connect emotionally with the products.

How do you see your role in market education, both for consumers and artisans?
Market education is essential. We are not just providing products; we are cultivating appreciation. We are demonstrating that handmade does not mean old-fashioned; it can mean premium, sustainable, and unique. We are also engaging directly with artisans, offering training and access to modern business tools. When artisans understand market demand and brand storytelling, they can better align their creativity with commercial success. Ultimately, education is the bridge between tradition and industry.

What would success look like for Saudi Artisanal Company by 2030, and what legacy do you hope to leave?
By 2030, we want to embed Saudi artisanal products into the everyday life of citizens and visitors alike. We envision a future where our crafts are not souvenirs but lifestyle products that are integrated into homes, offices, and fashion lines. Our legacy will be to prove that culture can be both an economic driver and a global brand. Saudi Arabia's artisans are not only preserving heritage; they are redefining how the world perceives craftsmanship in the modern age. ✖

Goal to be present in all major airports across KSA by 2026

Showcases Saudi artisanal products globally

New brand Artisana reflects spirit and commitment

BIO

Ibrahem Alnasir is the CEO of the Saudi Artisanal Company, where he leads the transformation of authentic Saudi crafts into global heritage experiences built on innovation and cultural authenticity. He previously served in senior leadership roles across government and industry, including Deputy Minister for Technology and Deputy Minister for Future Jobs and Capabilities at the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, and Deputy CEO for Planning & Business Development in the media sector. Alnasir has served on the boards of SAFCSP, NITA, Monsha'at, and ALAT. He was also the chairman of the executive committee of the National Technology Development Program and was a founding partner of the Saudi Heritage Hospitality Company. He holds degrees in science and business administration and mentors startups across the MENA region.



Image: Noor Riyadh



MARK *of quality*

A globally recognized name in fine art logistics, Constantine has built a fine art logistics platform that is fully integrated with the Kingdom's evolving cultural ecosystem.

Paul Williamson
CEO,
CONSTANTINE KSA

What were the strategic drivers behind Constantine's decision to expand into the Gulf region?

Constantine's origins date back to 1885 in the UK, where it was established as a family-run business deeply rooted in maritime logistics. Over the course of more than a century, we evolved from a shipping-focused company into a global leader in fine art logistics, guided by a consistent commitment to precision, care, and cultural stewardship. Today, Constantine remains a family-owned enterprise, with the Constantine family still playing an active role on the boards of both Constantine Ltd. in the UK and Constantine KSA. Our entry into the Gulf was both strategic and visionary. We initially established operations in the UAE in 2008 to support developments such as Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi. In Saudi Arabia, our formal entry occurred in 2018 when we were brought in to support LACMA's Beauty and Identity exhibition at Ithra, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture. Recognizing the scale and ambition of Saudi Arabia's cultural transformation under Vision 2030, we registered Constantine KSA later that year and began building local capabilities. Since then, we have grown to operate across Riyadh, Jeddah, AlUla, and Dammam.

What differentiates Constantine KSA's service offering in this unique context?

Our core offering goes far beyond transportation; we provide a comprehensive suite of services tailored to fine art and heritage objects, including museum-grade case-making, conservation, climate-controlled storage, customs facilitation, and public art installation. We were the first company to design and commission a Saudi-built fine art transport vehicle, custom-built to meet museum standards. In Riyadh and Jeddah, we operate fine art storage facilities that rival international benchmarks, and in Yanbu, we established a heritage conservation workshop, where we recently restored a historic train. We also maintain a stock of reusable crates, including the revolutionary Turtle Crates, which offer both environmental and logistical benefits. Constantine KSA has also strategically expanded its services in recognition of the natural synergy between public art consultancy, fine art logistics, and now conservation, enabling us to offer an integrated, end-to-end approach that directly supports the Kingdom's national vision for cultural development and heritage preservation.

How does Constant Art complement your logistics operations and the strategic rationale for this dual offering?

Constant Art serves as our arts and cultural consultancy arm. By blending the strengths of Constantine KSA and Constant Art, we have formed a uniquely integrated entity capable of delivering both the physical movement of art and the conceptual framework that shapes its presentation and impact. By identifying emerging trends and discovering talented artists, we curate unique strategies and experiences that inspire and engage audiences, fostering a sustainable future for the arts. A notable example of our company's collaborative strength is our appointment by the Royal Commission for AlUla to deliver the entire arts management and logistics package for the 2024 edition of Desert X AlUla. Our role there encompassed concept design support, feasibility studies, artist liaison, fabrication oversight, shipping, installation, de-installation, and comprehensive documentation for 15 new monumental artworks sited in this challenging environment. Additionally, we successfully delivered the Noor Riyadh Exhibition in 2022 as a further example of our temporary arts events management. For major strategic initiatives, we have developed overarching public art strategies for NEOM's The Line and Qiddiya City, defining typologies, delivery methodologies, procurement mechanisms, data analysis for benchmarking, and legacy visioning.

What are your key objectives for Constantine KSA?

By 2026, we aim to build a second purpose-built fine art warehouse in the Kingdom that reflects international museum standards. We want to increase our investment in local human capital, with more Saudi technicians, conservators, and project managers integrated into our operations. Another objective is to deepen our partnerships with Saudi institutions, both governmental and private, through formal collaborations, training programs, and policy advisory roles. At a macro level, we view ourselves as partners in the realization of Vision 2030's cultural and economic goals. ✖

BIO

Paul Williamson brings over 40 years of expertise in fine art logistics, management, and commercial strategy. As founder and CEO of Constantine KSA, he has led major projects across Saudi Arabia for over 15 years, advising on logistics policy, driving business development, and broadening the company's specialist offer. A former commercial director at Constantine Ltd London and founding member of ARTIM, Williamson is recognised globally for his leadership in museum-standard art handling and large-scale cultural delivery.

A TASTE OF *Saudi Arabia*

SAUDI ARABIA'S CULINARY LANDSCAPE is undergoing a quiet but profound transformation, bridging heritage and modernity, memory and ambition. Food, long a symbol of Saudi hospitality and identity, has become a platform for cultural storytelling and economic innovation alike. Guided by institutions such as the Culinary Arts Commission, the Kingdom is documenting and elevating its traditional recipes, nurturing a new generation of chefs, and positioning cuisine as both a creative industry and a diplomatic tool. From Michelin-minded fine dining to regional street food reinterpreted for global audiences, Saudi cuisine today reflects the nation's broader journey: confident in its roots, open to collaboration, and eager to share its flavor with the world. ✖



Image: Hina Saeed



SAUDI *flavors*

The Culinary Arts Commission is working to redefining local cuisine as a cultural ambassador by showcasing authentic Saudi flavors on the world stage while integrating culinary arts into national and international cultural dialogue.

Mayada Badr
CEO,
CULINARY ARTS COMMISSION

How does food reflect Saudi culture, and in what ways are you sharing that with the world?
Food is one of the most generous expressions of culture; it tells stories, carries memory, and creates connection. In Saudi Arabia, hospitality is central to who we are, and sharing food is how we express that. The Culinary Arts Commission has spent years documenting and preserving our culinary heritage, traveling across the Kingdom, recording traditional recipes, indigenous ingredients, and even references in ancient poetry. We are seeing a new generation of Saudi chefs and entrepreneurs embrace their roots. In our incubator programs, we are witnessing a clear drive to reinterpret Saudi food, give it new form, and share it proudly with the world. Even when the approach is modern, the essence remains deeply Saudi.

How does the commission help redefine the perception of the culinary profession in the Kingdom?
When the Ministry of Culture announced the creation of 11 commissions, one of which was the Culinary Arts Commission, it positioned culinary arts as a vital part of our national cultural fabric and gave it the institutional support it long lacked. This was an essential step in giving legitimacy and visibility to the field. Initially, our scholarship programs attracted people transitioning from other careers, though we now see high school graduates applying directly to culinary programs, which allows them to gain experience earlier and grow into leadership roles faster. We launched a hands-on initiatives to connect young talents with the industry. One example is our summer placement program, which pairs students with leading restaurants across the Kingdom. In 2024 alone, we received over 600 applications for just 50 spots. While these are unpaid, the real benefit lies in the experience, exposure, and relationships they build early on.

What partnerships are currently in the pipeline to support your mission?
Education remains our top priority. We are working closely with the Ministry of Education to integrate culinary arts into the national K–12 curriculum. Our goal is for students to see this as a credible and inspiring career path from an early age, long before they reach college. In parallel, we are expanding our scholarship programs. Culinary education is costly, and entry-level salaries in the field can be modest. Addressing this imbalance requires both government support and meaningful partnerships with the private sector. We are also forging international collaborations. One of the most exciting is our partnership with the Saudi Pavilion at the World Expo in Japan. Our culinary outlet at the Saudi Pavilion has received phenomenal feedback, not just from Saudis abroad, but also from Japanese and international visitors eager to discover Saudi flavors. Such cultural exchange is invaluable. Another area we are focused on is global competition. Through competitions like the national selections of Bocuse d'Or and the World Pastry Cup, Saudi chefs now have platforms to compete in these competitions internationally, showcase their skills, and connect with the world's leading culinary talent.

How do you tailor Saudi cuisine to diverse international audiences without compromising authenticity?
The key is leading with confidence in the quality of our ingredients and the strength of our culinary identity. When preparing for our Expo presence, we were advised by consultants not to serve lamb, as it was believed Japanese audiences would not enjoy it. But lamb is a cornerstone of Saudi cuisine, and we chose to stay true to that, using our unique preparation methods and local breeds known for their flavor. In the end, it was a hit. At international events like Taste of Paris and Taste of London, we have hosted pairings like French cheese with Saudi dates. We introduced 10 different Saudi varieties, and our chefs demonstrated how these flavors could be creatively integrated into European cuisine. It sparked real curiosity and dialogue. That is our approach: share boldly, educate thoughtfully, and create space for reinterpretation without losing the essence of who we are. ✖

BIO

Mayada Badr is the CEO of the Culinary Arts Commission, one of 11 sector-specific commissions under the Ministry of Culture. She holds a bachelor's degree in design management from Parsons School of Design and a higher diploma in culinary arts and pastry from Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. She is the founder of Pink Camel, a high-end patisserie in Jeddah, and a partner in two other restaurants.



NOMAS
نـومـاس
Saudi Cuisine













NOMAS

A CELEBRATION OF SAUDI CULINARY ART

At the heart of Marriott Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter Hotel, NOMAS stands as the Kingdom's first Saudi fine dining destination a ceremonial culinary experience where heritage meets modern elegance. Every detail tells a story: the menu is crafted by Saudi Chef Ahed, infusing each dish with authenticity and creative flair, while the interior, designed by a Saudi female designer, harmoniously blends tradition with contemporary sophistication.

Within its serene and elegant setting, NOMAS celebrates Saudi culture by transforming traditional flavors into art. Signature creations include Hail Kebiba, Kleijah, Qursan with Textures of Vegetables, Ocean Seafood Sayadiyah, Hashi Steak glazed with Saudi coffee, and Lamb Kabsa with Hassawi rice each crafted to honor heritage while reimagining it through refined presentation and taste.

More than a restaurant, NOMAS is a journey through Saudi Arabias soul where every plate, design detail, and service ritual is curated with precision and care. With its pioneering vision and commitment to excellence, NOMAS aspires to become the first Saudi restaurant to earn a Michelin Star, setting a new benchmark for the Kingdom's culinary scene.

At Marriott Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter, NOMAS stands as a proud symbol of Saudi hospitality – where heritage is celebrated, creativity thrives, and every guest experiences the true essence of Arabia served with elegance and heart.

CALO

Business is a sport, stay sharp!

Brain-boosting meal plans,
scheduled convenience,
designed for peak performance!

Let us prep, dominate your game.

Download the app

Download on the App Store

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BITE *by byte*

Calo has grown into a leading food tech company by combining technology and data-driven analytics to deliver personalized nutrition solutions.

Ahmed Alrawi
FOUNDER,
CALO

Calo has rapidly grown into a leading food-tech company. How has demand evolved in Saudi Arabia, and what opportunities do you see in this market?
Saudi Arabia's economic expansion has driven an increasing demand for high-quality, convenient food solutions. At Calo, we cater to professionals, fitness enthusiasts, and individuals committed to a healthier lifestyle. When we launched, the market was underestimated, but our ability to merge technology with personalization significantly expanded its potential. Today, our daily order volumes exceed those of the largest players from just a few years ago, underscoring the rising demand for solutions that seamlessly integrate into busy lifestyles.

What drove the recent decision for Calo to move its headquarters to Saudi Arabia?
The shift to Saudi Arabia aligns with our long-term vision and market dominance. The Kingdom is now our largest market, representing nearly 60% of our business, with Bahrain, the UK, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait representing the rest. Saudi Arabia's economic reforms and government-backed initiatives under Vision 2030 have cultivated an ideal environment for innovation-driven businesses such as ours. Establishing our headquarters here cements our presence in a rapidly evolving market while positioning us to capitalize on the growing demand for personalized nutrition solutions.

What made the UK the right choice for international expansion?
Expanding beyond the GCC required a market-agnostic approach, evaluating numerous international opportunities. The UK emerged as the ideal choice for several reasons. The country offers strong market potential, a high degree of culinary overlap with our existing customer base, and an underserved segment in personalized nutrition. Unlike other regions where we would need to overhaul our menu significantly, the UK allows us to introduce a tech-driven, highly customized food experience without fundamental operational overhauls. The market remains fragmented with no dominant leader, creating a clear opportunity for Calo's expertise in personalization and seamless user experience. After extensive discussions with over 70 companies worldwide, the UK stood out as the most strategic entry point for our global expansion.

How does Calo differentiate itself in a competitive market?
Calo stands at the intersection of technology, personalization, and operational excellence. Traditional meal providers offer rigid, one-size-fits-all solutions, while tech-driven platforms often lack seamless execution. Calo eliminates this trade-off by leveraging advanced analytics to tailor meals to individual dietary needs and taste preferences. Instead of offering generic healthy food, we deliver fully personalized nutrition solutions designed to optimize performance and well-being. Our operational efficiency, enabled by a highly scalable tech infrastructure and advanced logistics, allows us to maintain superior quality while expanding rapidly. This combination of personalization, efficiency, and consumer-centric design makes Calo the leader in the food-tech space.

What are Calo's key priorities for the medium term?
Calo's growth strategy is focused on four core areas. First, we are strengthening our core business by enhancing personalization, expanding into key markets, and driving operational efficiency. Second, we are diversifying our business models to include on-demand and retail channels, ensuring that healthy eating becomes more accessible. Third, we are broadening our customer segments by introducing specialized dietary solutions for individuals with specific health conditions such as diabetes and gut health concerns. Finally, we are preparing for a potential IPO, building strong governance structures and financial discipline to position ourselves as a leading public company in the region. By executing on these priorities, we are shaping the future of food-tech and transforming the way people approach nutrition. Calo is redefining the food-tech industry through a relentless focus on personalization, convenience, and technology-driven innovation. Our expansion into Saudi Arabia and the UK, coupled with our diversified business models, reflects our ambition to make healthy eating an effortless part of everyday life. As we continue scaling, our commitment remains unwavering: to set new standards in nutrition, enhance accessibility, and drive meaningful change in the way people approach food. With a strong foundation and a clear vision, Calo is poised to lead the next evolution of the global food industry. ✖

BIO

Ahmed Alrawi is a tech entrepreneur with a passion for building high impact products. He founded Calo in 2019 with the mission of "Making Healthy Easy," which has quickly grown into multiple countries across the GCC, has over 1,000 employees and delivers millions of meals.



FUELED *by coffee*

Roasting House revolutionized Saudi Arabia's coffee scene by blending global specialty expertise with local tradition and creating immersive and education customer experiences.

Osamah Alawwam
CO-FOUNDER,
ROASTING HOUSE

How did Roasting House technically and culturally introduce coffee into a market so deeply rooted in traditional coffee customs?
When I launched Roasting House in 2013, the approach was highly experimental and strategic. Over the course of a year, I sampled more than 135 coffee varieties from Indonesia, Colombia, Brazil, and Ethiopia. My objective was to curate a focused yet diverse range of six coffees that would represent the flavor spectrum of specialty Arabica: high acidity, low acidity, fruit-forward, chocolatey, and so on. Then, we focused on the retail experience. Our intent was not to chase footfall but to create a curated space for genuine coffee education and discovery. We also practiced consultative selling. We would take customers them on a journey, explaining acidity, sweetness, bitterness, origins, and brewing styles. Our goal was not to push high-priced items but to build trust and awareness. This approach turned customers into brand advocates, and social media amplified their stories. Saudi Arabia's young, curious, and quality-driven population responded with overwhelming positivity.

Your human-centric approach is evident. Could you elaborate on how this philosophy extends to your brand storytelling, shop design, and customer experience?
Our storytelling goes beyond the cup. We emphasize transparency at every level, from origin and processing to roasting and the final cup in the customer's hand. I still visit farms annually. These relationships ensure consistency, quality, and shared values. Since early 2024, we have redefined Roasting House as a customer experience company fueled by coffee. In a competitive marketplace, experience, narrative, and emotional connection are just as important as product quality. One example is our Funky Line, an experimental packaging and product series that introduced new fermentation techniques and bold visual identity. It quickly became a bestseller. Another innovation was our single-serve V60 sachets, which offer convenience without compromising quality, something no one in the region had done at that level. Within three months of its release, it won the Specialty Coffee Association's award for Best New Product in the Middle East. We now sponsor barista competitions and industry panels such as Coffee Talk. These platforms help us contribute to industry growth while reinforcing our position as thought leaders in specialty coffee.

How do you practice real, long-term sustainability with your suppliers?
Sustainability is often overused; however, for us, it became critical during the pandemic. Supply chains remained intact, but farmers, who are often the weakest link, suffered. Sustainability must begin at the farm, which means supporting farmers through training, providing them with tools like roasters, and investing in organic farming techniques. We encourage them to adopt biofertilizers and teach them how to create their own microorganisms from compost. Instead of paying for certifications, we subsidize the transition directly. This is time-consuming and expensive, but it builds long-term partnerships. We apply the same approach to Saudi farmers by training them and buying their produce at fair prices to support local agriculture.

How would you assess Saudi Arabia's specialty coffee ecosystem?
The Saudi coffee ecosystem is vibrant and expanding rapidly. According to the Quality of Life program, there are currently 530 cafés per million people, and the target is 1,060 by 2030. That is a reflection of how central coffee is to our social fabric. Historically, cafés were hubs for poets, politicians, and thinkers. Today, they are community spaces. Government initiatives like the Ministry of Culture's Year of Saudi Coffee and PIF's Saudi Coffee Company have helped to formalize the ecosystem, preserving heritage while driving innovation. The registration of Khawlani coffee as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage is a big step. It shows that Saudi coffee is not only cultural but globally recognized. The Ministry of Culinary Arts also released a detailed guidebook on Saudi coffee preparations. These developments signal a maturing industry. At Roasting House, we see our role as ecosystem enablers. We collaborate with the government, contribute to research, and support the narrative of Arabica's return to prominence, which are grown locally and appreciated globally. ✖

BIO

Osamah Alawwam is co-founder and board member of Roasting House Company and Vice President of the National Committee of Coffee & Roasters. He holds a BA (Hons) in business law and international business from London Metropolitan University. With prior experience at the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency and as an entrepreneur in the UK, he established Roasting House in 2013. The company has since grown into one of the Middle East's leading specialty coffee roasters, operating a state-of-the-art automated facility with a capacity of 10 tons per day.

JOURNEY OF SELECTION
SINCE 2013
ROASTING HOUSE

Equipment & Coffee Solutions

Custom sourcing and setup consulting.







Build your café with Roasting House tools

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COFFEE *& confectionary*

Saudi Arabia's coffee and confectionery sector is led by visionary entrepreneurs who are modernizing production, championing local ingredients, and building globally competitive brands.



Sohyb Alblushi
CEO,
HALF MILLION

THE NAME "Half Million" comes from the SAR500,000 in initial capital invested to open our first store in 2018 on Tahlia Street. From the outset, our concept was clear: deliver high-quality specialty coffee and premium raw materials at an accessible price point, all within an elevated customer experience. Many brands build loyalty around a single differentiator, such as low prices. In contrast, we work with multiple touchpoints: fair pricing, consistent quality, and an engaging, memorable experience. Customer experience for us starts long before the coffee reaches the customer. It begins with the design of our stores, namely comfortable seating, warm lighting, and intuitive layouts. We carefully select seasonal décor and scent elements to create an inviting ambiance that complements the product. Our menu is dynamic, with seasonal beverages, limited-time flavors, and innovative food pairings to maintain excitement and drive repeat visits. We were among the first in the Saudi specialty coffee market to establish a dedicated training center for baristas, cashiers, and cleaning staff. Our expansion strategy is phased and deliberate. The immediate priority is to deepen our presence within Saudi Arabia and establish a strong footprint in the GCC. The UAE and Qatar are next, followed by Iraq, then Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain. Once we have a solid GCC network, we will scale internationally.



Mohammad Al-Gwaiz
CEO,
LEVO CHOCOLATIER

I HAD IDENTIFIED a significant gap in the Saudi F&B sector, particularly in premium chocolate, and subsequently acquired an underperforming chocolate factory and executed a complete business turnaround. This involved rebranding, overhauling operations, and implementing stringent quality standards to create a new identity: Levo. The objective was to deliver world-class chocolate with a distinctive Saudi identity, incorporating flavors and ingredients that resonate with local consumers. Within our first year, we achieved profitability, an indicator of the demand for a premium Saudi brand that could rival European imports. Levo is at the forefront of "gastro-diplomacy," namely exporting culture through high-quality food products. For example, we incorporate premium oranges from Jazan, aromatic mint from Medina, and high-quality nuts from various regions across the Kingdom. These elements allow us to create chocolates that tell a story, resonating with both domestic and international consumers. Our approach not only positions Levo as a premium chocolate brand but also elevates Saudi Arabia's presence on the global confectionery stage. Our international expansion is already underway. Beyond the GCC, we are actively developing partnerships to facilitate entry into European and Asian markets. By focusing on brand storytelling, supply chain efficiency, and product differentiation, we aim to establish Levo as a globally recognized player in the premium chocolate industry.



Khalid Abutheeb
CEO,
SAUDI COFFEE COMPANY

SAUDI COFFEE COMPANY'S mission is to uplift the local coffee production, starting from farming up till the final product. Through coffee, we aim to celebrate and promote the heritage of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we want to expand the coffee industry to support the Saudi economy and GDP growth. This is achievable via bringing global know-how to local coffee manufacturers and creating more jobs for Saudis citizens. We want to empower local farmers, increase their production, and boost the efficiency of coffee production. We are focused on uplifting the full coffee value chain in Saudi Arabia, via enhancing the local knowledge and practices in sustainable farming. We want to educate farmers with the latest technology and procedures, via the Saudi Coffee Company Academy that provides workshops on coffee planting and harvesting all the way to the processing and preparation of the final product. We aim to teach the farmers the different ways to improve and diversify their coffee offerings. We have established a state-of-the-art factory where we can produce different products and SKUs. We work with large international companies to induce more technological knowledge transfer to Saudi Arabia. In efforts to modernize the local coffee sector, Saudi Coffee Company plans to invest almost SAR1.2 billion in the next 10 years to improve all aspects related to the industry.



Turki Alsabbar
CO-FOUNDER & CEO,
LA VANOÏSE

LA VANOÏSE aims to empower chocolate artisanal market participants by providing innovative solutions and sustainable practices. It has successfully served over 120 clients in more than 15 countries. Furthermore, in partnership with a local company, it is establishing a state-of-the-art production facility in Dammam to address market gaps and enhance the quality and innovation of artisanal chocolate products. The chocolate and confectionery industry is adapting to consumer demand for healthier options through trends such as natural and clean label products, functional chocolates, bold cultural flavors, and personalization. La Vanoïse supports these trends by offering strategic guidance on machinery selection and complementary services to help businesses innovate and meet evolving consumer preferences. We emphasize quality and innovation in chocolate, transforming consumer perceptions from price sensitivity to valuing unique experiences. By crafting premium products with compelling narratives and imaginative packaging, La Vanoïse effectively markets chocolate as an indulgent experience, allowing for reasonably premium pricing despite rising cacao costs. La Vanoïse excels in the chocolate industry through innovation, focusing on three pillars: collaboration with top European chefs for trend insights, strategic partnerships with equipment manufacturers for advanced processing technology, and bridging marketing with production to ensure scalability. This approach helps clients achieve efficiency and quality, keeping them at the forefront of market demands while delivering exceptional products.



Mohammed Khalid Al-Akeel
CEO, DEEMAH
(UNITED FOOD INDUSTRIES CORP.)

DEEMAH has been a cornerstone of the Saudi FMCG sector since its establishment in 1984. Over the last four decades, we have transformed from a modest biscuit producer operating two lines into a diversified food manufacturer with a robust portfolio and a significant industrial footprint. Our growth trajectory has been marked by strategic category expansions, first into confectionery in 2001, then into savory snacks in 2009, and most recently into cakes and chocolates in 2016. Each category was carefully chosen based on consumer demand and our ability to deliver high-quality, locally resonant products. Today, Deemah enjoys widespread recognition as a household brand, often likened to Ferrero in Italy, both in terms of nostalgic appeal and market presence. In 2024, Deemah underwent a major rebranding initiative to future-proof the brand. We revamped our visual identity to resonate with Gen Z and invested in new product development with a focus on functional and health-forward offerings. We are rolling out high-fiber cookies, sugar-free confections, and protein-rich cakes and are also developing keto-friendly products to cater to lifestyle-specific diets. We are also producing low-gluten alternatives and planning future investments in isolated production lines. This aligns closely with Saudi Vision 2030's emphasis on quality of life and preventive healthcare, reinforcing our commitment to national priorities while tapping into global wellness trends.



Rijal Almaa is a 900-year-old village located in southwest Saudi Arabia

Image: Matyas Rehak

1Q2025 TOURISM SNAPSHOT

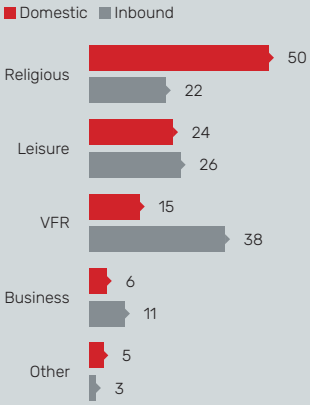
SOURCE: MINISTRY OF TOURISM

No. of tourists	31.4MN
Compared to 1Q2024	-1%

Tourism spending	SAR80.1BN
Compared to 1Q2024	+5%

TOURISM BY TYPE AND PURPOSE (1Q2025)

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF TOURISM



TOP SOURCE MARKETS BY NO. OF TOURISTS (1Q2025)

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Egypt	1.1
Pakistan	0.8
Kuwait	0.6
Bahrain	0.6
Indonesia	0.6

A NATION OF DESTINATIONS: Building a World-Class Tourism Industry

Places *in the Sun*

Saudi Arabia is rapidly transforming from an underexplored market to one of the most dynamic tourism destinations in the world. Guided by Vision 2030 and driven by an ambitious national tourism strategy, the Kingdom is reshaping its landscape with world-class destinations, pioneering projects, and bold investments aimed at attracting 150 million visitors annually by the end of the decade. This effort goes beyond building resorts and landmarks; it is redefining how tourism integrates with culture, nature, and sustainability to create a globally competitive and diversified sector.

At the policy level, the Ministry of Tourism, under the leadership of Ahmed Al-Khateeb, has enacted reforms that streamlined visas, encouraged private investment, and enabled the development of specialized destination management companies. These reforms laid the groundwork for a new ecosystem where public-private partnerships drive innovation, accelerate project delivery, and ensure long-term value for local communities.

Among the most emblematic projects is Diriyah, the birthplace of the Saudi state. Under the guidance of Jerry Inzerillo, Diriyah is emerging as a living heritage city, preserving authentic Najdi architecture while developing cultural institutions, luxury hotels, and a vibrant retail and entertainment scene. Similarly, Red Sea Global, led by John Pagano, is setting global benchmarks for regenerative tourism by protecting marine ecosystems, deploying renewable energy at scale, and redefining the luxury travel experience.

In the southwest, Soudah Development, spearheaded by Saleh bin Ibrahim Aloraini, is transforming the Asir highlands into Saudi Arabia's first mountain tourism destination. With its focus on nature, culture, and wellness, Soudah is designed to extend the tourism season year-round and diversify the national offering beyond traditional desert and coastal attractions.

These destination-driven strategies are complemented by the efforts of ASFAR and DAN, which are developing unique tourism experiences across the Kingdom's diverse landscapes from the Red Sea islands to the Empty Quarter. Meanwhile, Saudi-French collaboration through AFALULA, chaired by Jean-Yves Le Drian, is bringing a renewed focus on the UNESCO World Heritage site of AlUla, reinforcing the Kingdom's cultural diplomacy and positioning it as a global heritage hub.

This unprecedented scale of investment has also catalyzed a transformation in the hospitality sector. International operators and domestic champions are expanding their footprints, introducing new standards of service and sustainability. High-end resorts, lifestyle brands, and boutique properties are reimagining Saudi hospitality, turning destinations into experiences that reflect local culture and global best practices.

As Samer Al-Kharashi of the UN Tourism Regional Office emphasizes, Saudi Arabia's approach is not merely about numbers, but about building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable tourism economy. By harmonizing infrastructure development, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship, the Kingdom is positioning itself as a leading hub for travelers seeking authenticity, variety, and innovation.

Saudi Arabia's journey from a largely untapped market to a "nation of destinations" underscores its ambition to integrate tourism into the heart of its economic diversification. With bold projects across heritage, nature, luxury, and adventure tourism, the Kingdom is not just welcoming visitors—it is shaping the future of global travel. ✖



GLOBAL *hub*

The Saudi Ministry of Tourism is positioning the Kingdom as a global hub for tourism and a leading MICE destination for global conferences, cultural experiences, and sustainable economic progress.

Ahmed Al Khateeb
MINISTER OF TOURISM

MICE TOURISM is essential for bringing people together, fostering knowledge sharing, exchanging experiences, and showcasing best practices. It also plays a significant social role, contributing to broader economic development. The tourism industry, which includes MICE, recovered strongly following the pandemic, and achieved a full recovery by the end of 2024. It is essential that we learn from the past to prevent future disruptions of this scale. The significance of tourism to the global economy cannot be overstated: it accounts for 10% of global jobs, with 80% of these positions in SMEs. SMEs are the most vulnerable during economic crises, and supporting them is critical for resilience. Globally, 45% of the workforce in this industry is composed of women, making it an essential driver for inclusivity, economic prosperity, and job creation, particularly in smaller countries such as those in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Saudi Arabia recognizes the immense value of this sector and has prioritized its development within Vision 2030.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is focused on unlocking new economic opportunities beyond oil, with tourism, culture, sports, and entertainment as the cornerstone sectors. We have made remarkable progress in a short period. For example, our national sports strategy has made Saudi Arabia a hub for major international events, from hosting the FIFA Club World Cup to championship boxing matches, attracting the world's best players and athletes. Since 2019, we have welcomed visitors from 66 countries with one of the fastest and easiest e-visa systems globally.

We launched the National Tourism Strategy in 2019, and since then, we have experienced double-digit growth in jobs, contributions to GDP, and visitor numbers. In 2023, we surpassed our original target of 100 million visitors by 2030, leading us to raise the goal to 150 million visitors by 2030, including 55 million international arrivals.

We have a clear, detailed plan and the leadership to deliver on our promises. Our strategy identifies key markets and visitor segments. For example, we are leveraging Saudi Arabia's unique position as the center of Islamic heritage, attracting millions of religious tourists each year.

The transformation of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector is not just about economic growth; it is about building a sustainable and resilient economy. Tourism already contributes 5% of GDP, and we are on track to reach 10% by 2030, making it the second-largest revenue source after oil. This growth will create millions of jobs, empower SMEs, and drive social and economic progress.

> "Tourism already contributes 5% of GDP, and we are on track to reach 10% by 2030."

We are also focused on the role of MICE within tourism. MICE accounts for up to 25% of global tourism revenue, and Riyadh is set to become a leading global hub for conferences and exhibitions. Events like the Future Investment Initiative and the World Defense Show have already positioned Saudi Arabia as a premier destination for global leaders and innovators. In 2025, we will launch the first-ever Tourism Club, further enhancing confidence and collaboration within the sector.

Our efforts are paying off. Saudi Arabia is now the fastest-growing tourism destination in the G20, and our cities are more vibrant than ever. Riyadh Season alone has transformed the capital into a city that never sleeps, offering cultural, entertainment, and business activities year-round. Hosting Expo 2030 will be a defining moment for Saudi Arabia and the MICE sector. It will showcase our transformation to the world, attracting millions of visitors and driving lasting economic impact. Expo 2030 will demonstrate Saudi Arabia's capabilities and leadership on a global scale. We are working tirelessly to ensure that Riyadh becomes the global capital of MICE.

With cutting-edge infrastructure, seamless connectivity, and a dynamic society, we are ready to host the world's leading events and conferences. We invite you to visit Saudi Arabia, witness the progress, and experience everything the Kingdom has to offer. Together, we will shape the future of tourism and MICE, creating opportunities and driving innovation for generations to come. ✖

**Speech delivered during the opening ceremony of the International MICE Summit in Riyadh, December 2024*

BIO

Ahmed Al Khateeb is the chairman of several boards, including the Tourism Development Council, Saudi Tourism Authority, the Tourism Development Fund, Saudi Fund for Development, and the Saudi Red Sea Authority. He serves as a board member of the Public Investment Fund, NEOM, the National Development Fund, and the Red Sea Global. Prior to joining the Ministry of Tourism, Al Khateeb served as chairman of the board of directors of the General Entertainment Authority, Minister of Health, and Advisor to HRH the Crown Prince at the Royal Court and advisor to the Minister of Defense. He has over 30 years of experience in investment and financial services. He holds a bachelor of business administration (BBA) from King Saud University and a diploma in wealth management from Dalhousie University, Canada.



DESTINATION *transformation*

With a mandate to build and promote Saudi Arabia's national tourism brand, STA has been at the forefront of developing new destinations and enhancing traveler experiences across the Kingdom.

Fahd Hamidaddin
CEO,
SAUDI TOURISM AUTHORITY (STA)

Saudi Arabia surpassed its target of 100 million visits in 2023. What does this milestone signal for the future of tourism in the country?

Saudi's achievement of 100 million visitors in 2023, seven years ahead of target, signals a powerful validation of our strategic priority: transforming the entire country into a premier, year-round global destination. With our new goal of 150 million visitors by 2030, our focus is shifting from welcoming millions to deepening the quality of our destination offerings. This acceleration is enabled by the activation of our iconic regions at an unprecedented scale. For instance, the Saudi Red Sea is now operational with six luxury resorts, including Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Six Senses Southern Dunes, and the Red Sea EDITION with 10 more set to debut by the end of 2025.

How does STA collaborate with domestic and international stakeholders to enhance connectivity to Saudi?

Connectivity is scaling at speed, opening Saudi to the world like never before. Our strategy combines seamless digital access with a massive expansion of physical capacity. We work with global platforms such as Skyscanner, Expedia, and Wego, and with tourism boards from the UK to Oman, to make Saudi easier to find, book, and include in multi-destination journeys. Visa access is expanding at the same pace, with a Saudi eVisa now available to citizens of 66 countries. Saudi's USD100-billion investment in the aviation sector is rapidly enhancing our destination readiness. Our air connectivity already reaches 170 destinations, with new routes launched by British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Qatar Airways, and Wizz Air. Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International connects to 369 cities worldwide, and Riyadh Air will launch to serve 100 destinations by 2030. This infrastructure directly supports the deployment of new experiences. New cities are also taking shape, including Qiddiya City, which will bring entertainment, sports, and culture to the forefront. To accommodate the demand, hospitality capacity is expanding with almost 545,000 licensed hotel room keys available, and 291,000 luxury and premium keys in the pipeline alone.

How is Saudi shaping its destinations and policies to make sustainable tourism a reality?

Saudi is not just following sustainability trends but setting them. We are pioneering a model where tourism growth restores more than it consumes. The Saudi Red Sea is the world's largest regenerative tourism destination, powered entirely by renewable energy and designed with a zero-carbon footprint. 30% of Saudi's marine and coastal areas will be protected by 2030, including the world's fourth-largest coral reef system, home to more than 1,300 species of fish. We are building a legacy and unlocking the power of the blue economy. Cultural and heritage sustainability are equally vital, as Saudi Arabia is proudly home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We are restoring heritage treasures such as Diriyah and AlUla. Diriyah alone, a USD63-billion sustainable development and UNESCO World Heritage Site, is both reviving the old Saudi capital and building a new global destination for culture, dining, and design. Across the country, more than 25,000 architectural heritage sites are under protection. In 2024, over 6.5 million people visited Saudi's historic and cultural landmarks, including historic Jeddah, which has benefited from a comprehensive revitalization project, showing that preservation is not just moral duty, it is economic value. This is the future we are shaping; where regenerative tourism protects nature, empowers communities, and builds a legacy that lasts far beyond the journey.

How does STA define and measure success for the tourism sector?

For STA, success is not about counting visitors but about creating lasting value. We measure it through the demand we generate, the private investment we unlock, and the opportunities we create for Saudis. Our focus now is on building a tourism economy that never sleeps, one powered by data, driven by partnerships, and sustained by local talent. The next phase is about depth, not scale, and quality, not quantity. Tourism is no longer an outcome of Vision 2030 but one of its driving forces. ✖

BIO

Fahd Hamidaddin is a visionary leader driving one of the world's fastest-growing tourism markets. He is the founding CEO of STA, established in 2019 to align with Saudi Vision 2030. Hamidaddin serves as vice chair of TOURISE. He also holds prominent positions on the boards of several international and local organizations, including STA, the Tourism Development Council, Qiddiya Investment Company, and Saudi Arabian Airlines, among others. In addition, he is the secretary of the Umrah Strategy Steering Committee and various committees under the Pilgrim Experience Program. These roles underscore his pivotal contributions to advancing strategic objectives and strengthening the Kingdom's leadership on the global stage.

SUSTAINABLE *sector*



By focusing on education, digital transformation, and rural development, the UN Tourism Regional Office is helping to build a resilient and dynamic tourism industry in Saudi Arabia.

Samer Alkharashi
DIRECTOR - REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, UN TOURISM

What is your strategic vision to advance Saudi Arabia's tourism sector within the broader Middle East landscape?

Our strategic vision for advancing Saudi Arabia's tourism sector focuses on collaboration, innovation, and sustainability. By partnering closely with the Ministry of Tourism, we aim to build on the recent 69% increase in tourism arrivals, driving the sector towards the ambitious goals of Vision 2030. Key priorities include human capital development to enhance service quality, digital transformation to improve visitor experiences, and capacity building through initiatives like e-learning courses. These efforts align with Vision 2030's objectives to diversify the economy and create a vibrant society, positioning Saudi Arabia as a leading global tourism destination.

What flagship programs and initiatives is the UNWTO Regional Office spearheading to support the sustainable development of the Saudi tourism industry?

UN Tourism actively supports tourism development and capacity building in Saudi Arabia through a range of strategic initiatives. A key program is the e-learning agreement with Saudi Arabia, aimed at enhancing capacity building by offering open online courses. Covering both managerial and vocational topics, these courses are available through the UN Tourism Online Academy in multiple languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, and Spanish. The program provides high-quality educational resources that align with global standards and contribute to the goals of Vision 2030. Moreover, UN Tourism Global Tourism and Rural Development Program, managed by the Regional Office, aims to make tourism a pillar of growth and opportunity for rural communities. This includes initiatives like the Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism, which recognizes outstanding examples of rural tourism that preserve cultural and natural heritage. Hence, these initiatives collectively promote sustainable growth and innovation within the region's tourism sector, aligning with the goals of Vision 2030 and enhancing its global competitiveness.

How is the UN Tourism actively working to attract FDI and foster partnerships to further enhance the local tourism infrastructure?

The UN Tourism plays a vital role in attracting FDI to Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, with a strong focus on sustainable growth that benefits people, the planet, and prosperity. By promoting investments that align with these principles, the UN Tourism supports both Saudi Arabia and its member states in creating a tourism ecosystem that is inclusive, responsible, and sustainable. For example, during World Tourism Day 2023 in Saudi Arabia, the UN Tourism emphasized the importance of targeted investments that foster sustainable practices and inclusive growth, all while prioritizing people, the planet, and prosperity. In addition, Saudi Arabia continues to host high-profile international forums, such as the WAIPA Investment Forum 2024 and the Future Investment Initiative (FII). These events attract global investors, promote collaboration, and position Saudi Arabia as a central hub for investment, innovation, and tourism development. The Kingdom's focus on youth engagement and welcoming international investors also serves as a key driver for boosting tourism and fostering long-term growth. Through these platforms, the UN Tourism bridges global investment with local opportunities, connecting international investors with Saudi Arabia's growing tourism infrastructure.

What are the key challenges in embedding sustainability across the tourism value chain?

Sustainability is at the heart of global tourism strategies, and UN Tourism is working closely with Saudi stakeholders to promote sustainable practices. It collaborates with institutions like HTMi Saudi Arabia, one of the Kingdom's largest hospitality institutes, to offer workshops and training that equip students and professionals with the skills needed to lead in sustainable hospitality. Furthermore, through its partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, UN Tourism provides courses via the Tourism Online Academy, covering topics like Sustainable Destination Management, Train the Trainer, and Hotel Operations. These courses empower Saudi Arabia's workforce to implement sustainable practices across the tourism sector. A key challenge in embedding sustainability is aligning all stakeholders. However, Saudi Arabia is turning these challenges into opportunities by embracing sustainable practices, driving growth, and aligning with its Vision 2030 agenda to position tourism as a key sector for economic development. ✖

BIO

Samer Al-Kharashi is a distinguished Saudi diplomat, bringing his extensive expertise to the UN Tourism's mandate. He holds a high diploma in diplomatic studies from the Prince Saud Alfaisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies and a bachelor of law from King Saud University. His education includes programs at Harvard University, Cranfield University, and the European School of Protocol. His diplomatic career includes roles such as attaché in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia, vice consul for citizen affairs at the General Consulate of Saudi Arabia in Geneva, adviser for the minister assistant of Foreign Affairs, and chief of staff to the deputy minister for political and economic affairs. He also held the position of deputy head of mission of the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. from 2019-2022.



A view from the Diriyah Arena

Image: DGDA

INTRODUCTION, *urban regeneration & national vision*



Blending heritage with innovation, Diriyah Company is transforming the birthplace of the Kingdom into a timeless urban landmark that drives economic growth, celebrates Saudi identity, and sets a new global standard for sustainable urban regeneration.

Jerry Inzerillo
GROUP CEO,
DIRIYAH COMPANY

Diriyah is often described as "the birthplace of the Kingdom." How is Diriyah Company ensuring that Diriyah emerges not only as a cultural icon, but also as a global benchmark in urban regeneration?

At Diriyah Company, we are enormously proud to be playing our part in helping the economic transformation underway in the Kingdom through the success of Vision 2030. That sense of pride, of achievement, the desire to succeed, is something that runs through every one of the fantastic 3,000+-strong team we have at Diriyah. The talent, passion and enthusiasm of our Saudi majority team, many of whom are incredible young talented women, plays a vital part in our success. Success in ensuring we are building a vibrant new gathering place for the world, but rooted in our proud heritage and honor to be trusted as the guardians of the birthplace of the Kingdom. Diriyah is a project built to last, a place that is human-centric and low-rise by design, creating a world-class quality of life and experience for those who live and work there and the millions who will visit. We believe that what Diriyah Company is creating is a genuine urban masterpiece—a place that can become a template for how to build large-scale urban spaces of the future.

In what ways does Diriyah complement, rather than compete with, other gigaprojects under Vision 2030? How does its positioning reinforce the Kingdom's broader transformation?

One of the fantastic things about Saudi Arabia and its gigaprojects is the range and huge diversity among these amazing developments. They all have highly unique and individual characteristics and, when combined, are creating something of a size, scale, and ambition that is truly unprecedented. No other country has ever attempted simultaneous projects with these levels of investment and ability to elicit real long-lasting change as what we are witnessing today in the Kingdom. There are two key elements that make Diriyah unique among the other projects. First, our unwavering focus on urban development, and second, our deep dedication to honoring our 300-year history by seamlessly celebrating, embracing, and embedding our rich heritage into the very foundation of a city designed for the future. These pillars combine to create a truly unparalleled and visionary project. It is these distinctive features that ensure that in Diriyah – "The City of Earth" – a distinctive personality is being developed that truly complements the other visionary giga-projects that are transforming Saudi Arabia. In my career, which now spans over five decades, I have never worked on a project as exciting or as transformative in its impact. For me personally, it is an incredible honor to be part of this journey, alongside a 3,000-strong team, creating a development that is not only changing lives today, but will continue to do so for generations to come. There is truly only "One Diriyah."

What is Diriyah projected contribution to Saudi Arabia's GDP and job creation by 2030, and how will these impacts be sustained beyond Vision 2030?

Diriyah is a USD63.2 billion project and its contribution to Vision 2030 and beyond is truly monumental. Known as "The City of Earth," this transformative development is set to create approximately 180,000 jobs and contribute USD18.6 billion directly to Saudi Arabia's GDP. But remember this is a long-term urban development project that will have significant impact on an economic, social and cultural level for decades to come. And we are creating a new gathering place for the world where people will live, work and play and enjoy an outstanding quality of life. There will be an estimated 100,000 residents living in Diriyah, alongside tens of thousands of professionals working in the technology, media, arts and education sectors. And in the future, Diriyah will be welcoming an estimated 50 million visits a year, with our guests staying in one of our nearly 40 hotels and resorts across both our major masterplans, visiting art galleries and cultural institutes, attending performances in the Royal Diriyah Opera House, playing golf in our Greg Norman-designed championship golf course, shopping, or dining out among the many leisure and entertainment experiences we will have on offer. What this means is that Diriyah will be helping to ensure a long-term positive economic impact and continuing prosperity for companies and operators working in Diriyah and making a positive contribution in boosting non-oil and gas revenues for the Kingdom annually. ✖

BIO

Jerry Inzerillo is regarded as one of the world's great hospitality visionaries. As Group Chief Executive Officer of Diriyah Company, he is responsible for all the work undertaken by the Authority and its management. Prior to joining, he was the CEO of Forbes Travel Guide, where successfully expanded the company's footprint to over 100 countries. He was also one of the key figures behind organizations such as One&Only Resorts, Ian Schrager Hotels, Four Seasons, and Hilton Hotels, and served as president of Kerzner Entertainment Group overseeing tourist destinations and properties in South Africa, the Bahamas, Dubai, Morocco, Mauritius, Mexico, and the Maldives, as well as CEO of IMG Artists.



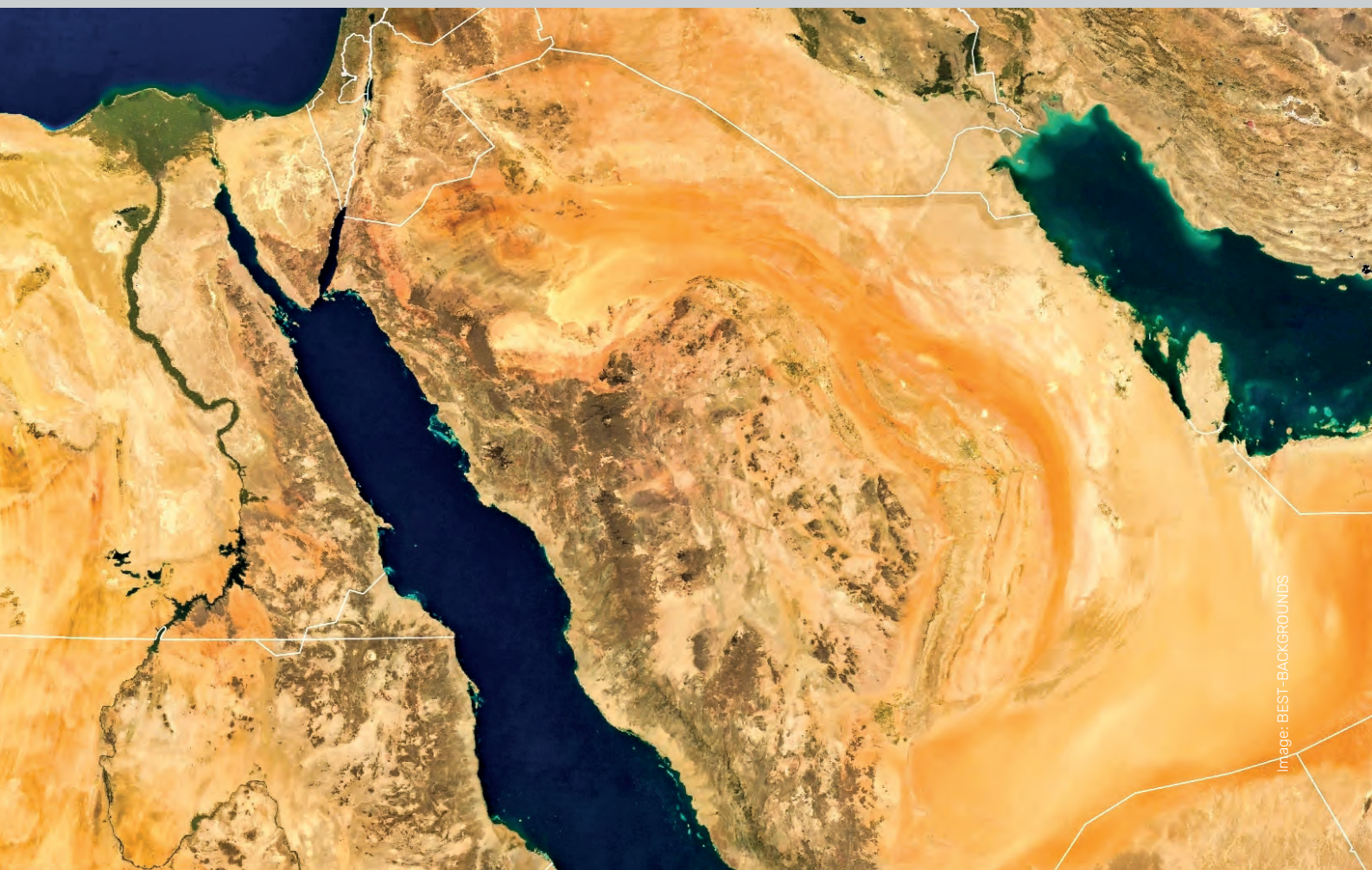
John Pagano
CEO,
RED SEA GLOBAL

BIO

John Pagano was appointed CEO in January 2018 and is responsible for leading The Red Sea Project's development from the ground up to create a unique luxury and environmentally sustainable international tourism destination. Pagano brings more than 35 years of international experience in delivering large-scale development projects.

WE REALLY HAD TO start from scratch. We had to develop the vision, turn that vision into a master plan, and then move into design and implementation. As we began the process, I learned that His Royal Highness was deeply involved in the design journey—constantly pushing us to achieve things that had never been done before. He wanted to create something truly unique, something unlike anything else in the world. We weren't trying to replicate the Maldives, the Seychelles, or Dubai. His vision was to build something quintessentially Saudi, something that would be instantly recognizable as part of the Red Sea, with its own distinct identity. The journey came with many challenges. Today, our organization has grown to more than 9,000 employees, a direct result of the direction we decided to take. I wanted to do things differently in Saudi Arabia. Traditionally, projects like this relied heavily on third parties, bringing in external consultants who would arrive, deliver, and then leave. I didn't want that approach for two main reasons. First, this is a long-term project, with many developments to be delivered over a 10-year period or more. It seemed a missed opportunity not to invest in building our own organization, one that could not only deliver The Red Sea Project but also take on future developments across the Kingdom and, eventually, internationally. That decision meant building everything from the ground up. We started as a very small entity, securing our company registration, setting up systems, and hiring the right people. What surprised me was how easy it was to attract talent—people were genuinely excited about what we were doing. We were pioneering something that had never been done before in this region, fully supported by the country's leadership and by the Saudi people. Everyone was encouraging us to go further, to use this project as a platform to showcase Saudi Arabia in a completely new light. ✖

**Sourced from an appearance on The Mo Show Podcast.*



TRAVEL & *Destinations*

Saudi Arabia is rapidly transforming its global image, evolving from a land defined by pilgrimage and petroleum into one of the world's most exciting travel destinations. Under Vision 2030, tourism has become a national priority, supported by giga-projects such as NEOM, The Red Sea, and Diriyah that highlight the Kingdom's cultural heritage, natural beauty, and modern ambition. Simplified visa processes, enhanced connectivity, and growing private-sector participation are driving new momentum across the industry. From the rock-hewn wonders of AlUla to the Red Sea's untouched coastlines and the dynamic skylines of Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia offers visitors a journey through both history and innovation. As it opens its doors to the world, the Kingdom is redefining what travel means in the Middle East. ✖



A NEW *benchmark*

Soudah Development is transforming one of Saudi Arabia's most unique natural and cultural landscapes into an ultra-luxury, world-class mountain destination.

Saleh bin Ibrahim Aloraini
CEO,
SOUDAH DEVELOPMENT

How do you define the strategic importance of Soudah Peaks within the broader framework of Vision 2030 and the Kingdom's efforts to diversify its tourism offerings?

Soudah Peaks is the flagship project of Soudah Development, a luxury real estate developer owned by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and chaired by HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. Soudah Peaks is the Kingdom's first ultra-luxury mountain destination, rising 3,015m above sea level on the Kingdom's highest peak. The project offers ultra-luxury assets and experiences nestled within the region's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and world-class hospitality. It will feature ultra-luxury mansions, luxury second-home options, high-end retail, and culinary experiences, in addition to many attractions catering to UHNWIs and HNWIs from the region and around the world. Its strategic importance lies in three key areas that directly support Vision 2030. First, it elevates the Kingdom's tourism sector by introducing a distinctive high-end offering that diversifies the national tourism portfolio and strengthens Saudi Arabia's global positioning. Second, it preserves and showcases the cultural and environmental heritage of the Aseer region through careful master planning, low-density development, and extensive reforestation and wildlife restoration initiatives. Third, it stimulates economic diversification and opportunity by attracting investment, creating thousands of jobs, and contributing significantly to GDP growth. By balancing luxury, sustainability, and authenticity, Soudah Peaks sets a new benchmark for mountain tourism. It reflects the ambition of Vision 2030 to establish Saudi Arabia as one of the world's premier destinations, while ensuring that development creates enduring value for communities, the environment, and future generations.

How is Soudah Development shaping a distinctive brand narrative that differentiates Soudah Peaks from other luxury mountain destinations worldwide?

Soudah Development is shaping a distinctive brand narrative for Soudah Peaks by positioning it as a destination where nature, culture, and luxury converge. Unlike other mountain resorts that rely solely on natural beauty or high-end amenities, Soudah Peaks is rooted in the authentic heritage of the Aseer region, weaving traditions, architecture, and community spirit into world-class hospitality experiences. This narrative emphasizes ultra-luxury, privacy, exclusivity, and positive impact through sustainability and preservation, protecting the natural environment while celebrating local identity. With Saudi Arabia's highest peaks, cool climate, and breathtaking landscapes as its backdrop, Soudah Peaks will offer a rare blend of adventure, wellness, and cultural immersion, delivering a luxury experience that is both exclusive and authentic, and setting a new benchmark for mountain destinations in the region.

What roles do cultural heritage and local communities play in defining this brand and the visitor experience?

Cultural heritage and local communities are at the heart of Soudah Peaks' brand and visitor experience. The development is not just about creating a destination but about meaning, legacy, and deep connection. Aseer region has distinctive heritage, culture, identity, cuisine and architecture, and we make sure that these are preserved and highlighted in a sustainable manner. We have a dedicated Destination Sustainability team focused on preserving nature, biodiversity, and heritage. This team collaborates with different stakeholders and executes strategic initiatives with relevant heritage and cultural organizations to safeguard heritage sites and organize arts and culture workshops for the local community. There are around 300 heritage sites in Soudah Peaks areas and recently completed the first phase of emergency repairs to four important sites. We also have a dedicated Community Capacity Building team that plans and executes initiatives to enable and empower the local community in Soudah and parts of Rijal Almaa. They send students abroad to study tourism and hospitality management as part of an international scholarship program, they organize English language courses, and they attract promising talent to professional on-the-job training programs. All of these are directly linked to the visitors' experience, which will be shaped by an enabled and empowered community that will be ready for opportunities in the flourishing sectors of hospitality and tourism in the region and the Kingdom. ✖

BIO

Saleh bin Ibrahim Aloraini, CEO of Soudah Development, brings over 18 years of leadership in real estate development, mega project management, and organizational establishment, with senior roles at leading local and international firms such as Bechtel, Parsons, and Raidah Investment Company. He previously served as director at the Center of Excellence in the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and currently sits on the board of KAFD Development and Management Company. Aloraini holds a master's in engineering management from Queensland University of Technology, Australia, and a bachelor's in civil engineering from King Saud University.

PEAK *experience*

Saudi Arabia's lavish hospitality sector, already fulfilling Vision 2030's economic diversification goal, is on the ascendancy. One project in particular is literally taking the tourist experience to new heights.

WELCOME to Soudah Peaks, a flagship scheme of the Public Investment Fund (PIF). "As a PIF company…" Saleh bin Ibrahim Aloraini, the CEO of, Soudah Development explains, "…we benefit from the ecosystem PIF has built across tourism, real estate, infrastructure, entertainment, aviation, and beyond." Naturally, through sustainable construction and subsequent operation the project conforms to the national target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2060. An additional 73,000 indigenous trees will enlarge the ecosystem for flora and fauna, while also meeting carbon capture objectives. And with, "…Saudi Arabia's highest peaks, cool climate, and breathtaking landscapes as its backdrop, Soudah Peaks will offer a rare blend of adventure, wellness, and cultural immersion, delivering a luxury experience that is both exclusive and authentic, and setting a new benchmark for mountain destinations in the region," Aloraini notes. And as a sizeable employer during and after construction, the project builds new value chains across construction, hospitality, transportation and retail sectors, advancing Saudization in the process.

A USD7.7 billion project, Soudah Peaks is a high-end mountain tourism scheme of true economic promise. The PIF envisages welcoming two million visitors by 2033, by which point generated revenues will have scaled the cost of construction. The built component will ultimately feature 2,700 hotel rooms, 1,336 residential units, and a 1,000-bed medical center, introduced in multiple phases. Retail space of 80,000 sqm is planned, along with other attractions. Despite its overall size, developed land will not exceed 1% of the total. The project will actually be a thriving upscale community in its own right, with local higher education and healthcare availability. The former featuring King Khalid University and the latter through The King Faisal Medical City, a prospective 1,000-bed medical complex. For visitor convenience, access will be facilitated by infrastructure projects like the expansion of Abha Airport's annual capacity to 13 million passengers as well as new road infrastructure to curb travel times. Operations began in September 2023 and the staggered project has an estimated completion date of 2033.

The project celebrates local heritage while committing to ecological preservation, including the reintroduction of the mountain ibex. There are around 300 local heritage sites, and the Soudah Peaks project undertakes local restoration work in the Aseer region. In June 2025, for example, the initial restoration phase of the Sheikh's Fortress, among three heritage sites receiving emergency repairs, was completed.

Fresh air, silence and scenery aside, residents and visitors will pursue year-round outdoor activities like hiking paragliding, mountain biking, horse riding, and zip-lining. Those reluctant to leave the green will be catered for by an 18-hole golf course high on the Soudah plateau. The project comprises the six uniquely curated districts of Tahlal, Sahab, Sabrah, Jareen, Rijal, and Red Rock with each to house premium hotels, mountain resorts, with accommodation ranging from chalets and villas to premium residential units. Destination choice will reflect personal preference for sports and adventure, wellness, or more cultural pursuit. Tahlal is envisaged at the primary touristic hub sustainably delivering premium dining and retail as well as entertainment, with conference capabilities for the MICE industry. The clifftop Sahab district, a mountain sports hub, features a high-altitude performance and rehabilitation center for extreme athletes. The remote luxury residential and hospitality Sabrah district on the southern plateau of Soudah Peaks will feature a wellness spa, yoga pavilion, and meditation retreats. Jareen district celebrates local nature, where hiking among heritage sites and agricultural landscape provides inner peace. Never far from comfort, however, the district will boast 35 distinctive glamping pods. Located within the Rijal Almaa heritage village, Jareen will cater to year-round events, and its boutique hotels will replicate historic motifs. The Rijal district, graced with historic architecture, will showcase authentic culture and heritage. Finally, the Red Rock district, overlooking Red Rock Mountain, sits peacefully within a national park on the northernmost point of the Soudah escarpment. It, too, offers glamping opportunities and sites of historical interest.

A story of strategic investment at work, the Soudah Project elevates the Kingdom's tourism credentials and global reputation for premium delivery. All while winning plaudits for its respectful preservation of local heritage, and environmental stewardship. ✖



SIGHTS *to behold*

ASFAR works to transform promising Saudi cities into attractive destinations by highlighting the uniqueness of each location in order to develop a culturally rich and economically vibrant Saudi tourism landscape.

Fahad Bin Mushayt
CEO,
ASFAR

With the Kingdom's goal to attract 150 million visitors by 2030, what role does ASFAR play in contributing to this ambitious target?
ASFAR was publicly launched in July 2024 with the mission of catalyzing Saudi tourism investments through the power of win-win partnerships, particularly focusing on promising cities beyond Riyadh and Jeddah. With the aim of bolstering eight priority promising cities across the Kingdom to attract both local and international tourists, ASFAR ensures extensive collaborations with significant stakeholders and players in the ecosystem such as the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Investment, Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) and all relevant government entities including municipalities, development authorities and royal commissions across the Kingdom. Through our Destination Investments approach, we have identified eight priority promising cities: Al Baha, Yanbu, Hail, Al Taif, Al Khobar, Al Dammam, Al-Ahsa and Al Jouf. Each destination is approached with a strategy tailored to its unique characteristics and competitive advantages, which includes collaborating with local authorities and adhering to zoning master plans. We create destinations that embody the unique DNA of each area, incorporating local culture, cuisine, and natural beauty. We also place strong emphasis on empowering and engaging with the local communities, through several aspects and offerings, including a farm-to-table concept using local chefs and ingredients, for example. This not only enhances the guest experience but also supports the local economy and quality of life wherever we invest. The Kingdom's overarching USD800-billion investment plan in tourism, and how the country secured USD13 billion in private-sector investments specifically in the tourism industry will increase the number of hotel rooms by 150,000-200,000 within the next two years. ASFAR is a key contributor to these efforts and is instrumental in achieving the Kingdom's ambitious goal of attracting over 150 million visitors by 2030 through its diversified and inclusive tourism initiatives.

How does ASFAR aim to attract more investors to participate in the transformative journey unfolding in Saudi Arabia's tourism landscape?
ASFAR aims to strategically leverage the global curiosity surrounding Saudi Arabia's rich cultural and scenic diversity. Our approach focuses on enabling co-investment with both local and international private sectors through strategic partnerships. By identifying the right partners, we co-develop joint ventures and subsidiaries that enhance the entire tourism and hospitality value chain. We have announced four of our eight priority destinations. In Yanbu, we are transforming its industrial image into a vibrant tourist beach destination with four unique offerings, including a state-of-the-art resort, beach club, marina, diving center, and a lifestyle hotel. In Al Ahsa, home to the world's largest oasis and a UNESCO site, we are revitalizing a 500,000-sqm park, featuring one of the world's largest fountains, along with hospitality, retail, and F&B outlets, breathing new life into the city's tourism landscape. Meanwhile, in Taif, ASFAR is advancing tourism through joint ventures that introduce wellness retreats and botanical gardens, blending local charm with visitor well-being.

How is ASFAR working to transform perceptions of the destinations where you invest and operate, both regionally and internationally?
Through strategic partnerships with local municipalities, businesses, and international organizations, ASFAR enhances the credibility and attractiveness of these regions, showcasing collaborative efforts to develop tourism and investment opportunities in promising cities. By investing in infrastructure development, ASFAR improves accessibility and amenities, making these areas more appealing to tourists and investors alike. The company emphasizes unique experiences that each destination offers, such as adventure tourism, cultural events, and culinary experiences, helping to differentiate them from other markets. Community engagement is a vital aspect of ASFAR's approach, ensuring that development aligns with local values and needs, which fosters goodwill and enhances the overall visitor experience. Furthermore, a focus on sustainability initiatives addresses global concerns about environmental impact, positioning our destinations as forward-thinking and socially responsible. ✖

BIO

With over two decades of experience, Fahad bin Mushayt's career has spanned city management, real estate investments, strategic business development, and operations management across sectors. Prior to his position as CEO of ASFAR, he was deputy governor for investment and business development at the State Property General Authority and CEO of the Diplomatic Quarter General Authority in Riyadh. He also held senior roles at Saudi Telecom Group. Mushayt has served on the boards of international firms such as Maxis Communication in Malaysia and Aircel in India. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Southern California, a master's in economics from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a Bachelor of Science in operations research from King Saud University.



FARM *and table*

By working with major hotels and local farms, DAN seeks to redefine the agritourism landscape in Saudi Arabia, offering visitors unique and meaningful stays.

Abdulrahman Abaalkhail
CEO,
DAN COMPANY

Can you detail the operational scope and strategic objectives of DAN?
DAN is strategically positioned to redefine the agritourism landscape in Saudi Arabia. Our mission is two-fold: to establish and grow a homegrown agritourism brand that we plan to launch by the end of 2024, and to develop a robust agri-hospitality ecosystem. As a real estate developer, operator, and owner, we are currently developing a five-star resort in Al-Ahsa, designed to blend luxury with affordability while reflecting the authentic culture of the region. Additionally, our franchising strategy supports farm and Istiraha owners by providing comprehensive guidance through the entire lifecycle of their projects from site selection to operational execution. Our franchise and management agreements typically extend for a decade, including continuous support in standard operating procedures, design and architecture support, contractor's database support, and quality assurance during construction. Post-construction, we facilitate operational training and provide advanced technology for seamless management, maximizing exposure through sophisticated revenue, channel management, and reservation systems. Our aim is not just to offer a franchise model, but to ensure our partners can fully capitalize on their investments, supported by financing solutions through partnerships with entities like the Tourism Development Fund and other financial institutions.

Considering the novelty of boutique hotels in the Saudi market, how do you plan to educate and adapt the market to this concept?
Educating the market is integral to our strategy. We assess each potential site to ensure its viability and scalability, often advising against overly ambitious expansions that could complicate operations. For example, we recommend that family-run farms start with about 10 rooms to maintain simplicity and focus on quality family-centered experiences. In 2025, we will introduce our proprietary agri-hospitality brand and initiate extensive educational programs for our partners, illustrating how to professionalize the use of personal assets for sustainable revenue. Initially, we will support the management of the first few franchises to ensure smooth operations and the business model's effectiveness before gradually transitioning management to the owners. This hands-on approach not only assures quality and operational efficiency, but also ingrains a deeper understanding and capability among our partners.

What key regions are you targeting for expansion?
Our initial focus is on Al-Ahsa, leveraging its accessibility within a four-hour drive from major urban centers and neighboring countries, tapping into a potential market of 15 million people. Our expansion strategy will replicate this model across other regions, aiming to foster a connection with nature and community through experiences like farm-to-table dining and interactive agricultural activities, while immersed in the unique culture of each region. While financial sustainability is crucial, our overarching goal as a government-backed entity is to contribute meaningfully to the local community by supporting local economies, creating permanent job opportunities, and enhancing the local value chain.

What are the primary challenges you face, and how do you plan to address them?
Our main challenges include navigating regulations and aligning expectations and operational standards with new franchisees. To tackle these, we actively engage with key governmental bodies to anticipate hurdles and ensure compliance, and we are progressing in the right direction. For franchisees, we provide comprehensive training through partnerships and ongoing support to align with our operational standards. This proactive approach transforms challenges into opportunities for process improvement and strengthens our collaboration with local authorities, enhancing the feasibility and excellence of our projects.

As we look toward 2025, what are DAN's primary goals?
By 2025, our immediate goal is to successfully launch two distinct brands under the DAN umbrella, with each targeting specific market segments to offer tailored experiences. We also aim to commence operations of two franchise assets in Al-Ahsa and introduce our concept more broadly to the market with prototype rooms ready for showcase by year-end. Our strategy emphasizes not just the affordability or luxury of the experiences we offer, but the lasting memories and unique engagements they facilitate. This distinction in our offerings allows us to cater to diverse consumer preferences while maintaining a focus on meaningful interactions. ✖

BIO

Abdulrahman Abaalkhail is the CEO of DAN Company, a Public Investment Fund company promoting agritourism, ecotourism, and adventure tourism in Saudi Arabia. In addition to his role at Dan Company, he serves as chairman of Al-Fadhili Housing Co. and Mumtalakat, vice chairman at Alrajhi Ekhwan, and holds positions in investment committees at Maharah Human Resources and Awj Holding Co. Previously, he was CEO of MASIC Logistics and Almutlaq Real Estate Investment Company and held a senior position at Al-Faisaliah Group Holding. Abaalkhail started his career at Ernst & Young and holds an MBA from the University of Wales, with executive education from IMD and INSEAD.



A HISTORY *reborn*

France and Saudi Arabia are cooperating, through AFALULA, to make AlUla a global tourist destination.

Jean-Yves Le Drian
CHAIRMAN,
FRENCH AGENCY FOR ALULA DEVELOPMENT
(AFALULA)

Can you provide an overview of The French Agency for AlUla Development's mission and its role in supporting the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) in transforming the AlUla region into a global cultural and tourist destination?

France was chosen by Saudi Arabia, as part of the AlUla project, not only for its cultural influence, but also for its ability to transform heritage into a world-class tourist destination. In July 2018, AFALULA was created to co-construct the project with its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU). AFALULA's mission is to mobilize all French companies and know-how and has integrated the best experts in all the fields covered by the project: cultural engineering, archaeology, architecture and urban planning, agriculture and botany, tourism and hospitality, education, security, horse-riding, infrastructure, and water and environmental management. Its vocation is to support Saudi Arabia in the sustainable economic, tourism, and cultural development of AlUla in order to make this region, with its exceptional heritage, one of the Kingdom's cultural capitals and a worldwide tourist destination.

AlUla is known for its rich historical and cultural heritage. How is AFALULA working to preserve and promote these cultural assets while simultaneously fostering tourism and economic development?

With the Vision 2030 plan, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom, Mohammed bin Salman, has embarked on a turning point in favor of modernizing the country and diversifying its economy. By focusing on youth, innovation, sustainability, and openness to the world, he is strengthening the Kingdom's role as a driving force in international trade and relations. The AlUla project is at the heart of this ambition. Its aim is to turn the region into a major cultural and tourist attraction by celebrating its multi-millennial history. AlUla has indeed been a formidable crossroads of civilizations that have left here a heritage of inestimable richness. However, no development initiative in AlUla has been or will be undertaken without first considering the protection and preservation of its cultural heritage.

Cultural exchange is often an integral part of promoting tourism and collaboration is key to achieving this goal. Can you share some examples of partnerships and collaborations that AFALULA has established to promote AlUla as a global destination?

Our ambition is to put AlUla on the world map, as a global tourist destination, but even more specifically as a place of culture. To this end, our two countries have forged numerous partnerships covering a wide range of areas of expertise. Archaeology is a key discipline at AlUla. History, which permeates this place, is the starting point for the project. The various civilizations that have succeeded one another have left a rich heritage that constitutes the soul of the site. The French teams from CNRS, Archaïos, and Sorbonne University are very active here. The archaeological excavations at the Dadan, Oasis, Old City, Khaybar, and Hegra sites have made the region the archaeological epicenter of the near and Middle East. On December 4, 2021, the Villa Hégra project was born out of the signing of a second intergovernmental agreement between France and the Kingdom on the creation of a prestigious cultural institution in AlUla dedicated to the arts and creativity. This major intercultural exchange project seals the artistic dialogue between France and Saudi Arabia and, more broadly, between European and Arab cultures. Villa Hégra is the symbol of a meeting between the heart of the Arab world and the creative spirit of France. ✖

BIO

Jean-Yves Le Drian has been the Chairman of the French Agency for AlUla Development (AFALULA) since July 2023. He has also been the French president's personal representative for Lebanon since June 2023. He previously held several ministerial positions in France, including Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense, and Minister of State for Marine Affairs.

UNIQUE *narratives*

Panther Holdings has successfully positioned itself as Saudi Arabia's leading homegrown cultural tourism brand, crafting experiences that inspire and connect while celebrating Saudi heritage on the world stage.



Princess Fahda Al Saud
CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER,
THE TRAVELING PANTHER

BIO

Fahda Al Saud is a pioneering cultural strategist and architect of transformational tourism experiences, recognized globally for her influential role in redefining how emerging destinations engage with international audiences. She is the Co-Founder & Chief Strategy Officer of Panther Holdings. Beyond operations, her work has played a quiet but influential role in cultural policy, regional destination development, and national tourism strategies. A communications expert by background, she frequently contributes to international forums on cultural diplomacy, economic transformation, and sustainable tourism.



Manayer M. AlSharekh
CO-FOUNDER & CEO,
THE TRAVELING PANTHER

BIO

Manayer M. AlSharekh is an entrepreneur with over 18 years of experience in strategic transformation, venture building, and international business development. The Co-Founder & CEO of Panther Holdings, she is an alumnus of Central Saint Martins and UCL, with a master's degree in technology entrepreneurship and currently completing her PhD at École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (ESCP). Her extensive experience with leading institutions in Kuwait has equipped her with sophisticated capabilities in cross-cultural strategic ventures and emerging market development.

How was the brand was conceived, and how does its vision reflect a Saudi-born spirit of adventure with a global outlook?

Panther Holdings was founded on a belief in the power of stories, experiences, and design to connect people with purpose. What began a decade ago with The Traveling Panther, a passion project rooted in exploration and cultural storytelling, has evolved into Saudi Arabia's first vertically integrated cultural hospitality group. Our portfolio brings together five complementary businesses: The Traveling Panther (TTP) in destination management and cultural advisory, BYOOT in boutique heritage accommodation, ROUF in property management with proprietary hotel-grade technology, TTP Retreats in immersive experiences, and Advisory Services guiding international partners into the Saudi market. Together, they create one seamless, culturally grounded guest journey across the Kingdom's tourism value chain. We are building a homegrown platform that controls the entire guest experience, from the moment travelers discover Saudi Arabia to how they travel through destinations, where they stay, and how deeply they engage with local culture. This end-to-end integration across the tourism value chain creates competitive advantages that fragmented operators cannot replicate. Since 2021, TTP has served over 37,000 guests and demonstrated consistent double-digit growth from 2021 to 2024. This operational track record, combined with our cultural fluency and government relationships, positions Panther Holdings uniquely in Saudi Arabia's tourism transformation.

How do you curate experiences that go beyond traditional tourism to celebrate Saudi heritage, landscapes, and local creativity?

TTP designs journeys that immerse guests in the soul of Saudi Arabia through meaningful, culturally rooted experiences. Operating from offices in AlUla and Riyadh, with planned expansion into the Kingdom's southern region, we have developed deep regional expertise that allows us to create truly contextual experiences. Every itinerary balances luxury with authenticity. We work closely with local artisans, storytellers, and communities to craft experiences that showcase Saudi heritage, from private desert encounters to cultural immersions in secluded destinations. What distinguishes our approach is personalization at scale. Each journey celebrates the diversity of Saudi landscapes from AlUla's ancient formations to the Red Sea coasts, Aseer's mountain villages to Jeddah's historic districts; while weaving in the narratives that make each region unique.

You help partners authentically engage with Saudi identity and aesthetics. What defines this distinctive approach?

What began as TTP's commitment to authentic storytelling has evolved into a comprehensive advisory practice that helps global partners, institutions, and investors engage meaningfully with Saudi Arabia's cultural and creative landscape. Since launching advisory services, TTP has worked with the Royal Commission for AlUla as its guest management partner, the Saudi Tourism Authority to audit tourism services across all 13 regions, and the Aseer Development Authority on destination development and experience design. For international luxury brands and global publishers, we provide cultural advisory ranging from market entry strategy and brand localization to cultural research, expert sourcing, and on-ground operational support for creative teams working across the Kingdom. What sets TTP apart is our ability to operate as both cultural interpreters and industry builders. As part of Panther Holdings' vertically integrated ecosystem alongside BYOOT, ROUF, and TTP Retreats, we blend advisory insight with execution capability.

How does The Traveling Panther ensure that luxury travel leaves a positive and lasting impact?

At Panther Holdings, sustainability and community impact are built into how we operate across our portfolio. Our approach to ethical luxury ensures travel enriches both guests and destination, leaving a positive cultural and environmental footprint. Through TTP, we work closely with local communities, artisans, and suppliers across every destination, ensuring experiences directly support the people and traditions that make each place unique. From sourcing locally crafted products and engaging regional guides to collaborating with cultural institutions and preservation initiatives, we channel tourism value back into host communities. Luxury, for us, is defined by purpose, authenticity, and connection, not excess. This philosophy champions a new hospitality model that celebrates culture, empowers local economies, and ensures every journey creates lasting, regenerative impact on both people and place. ✖



Ahmad Arab
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN,
DRB ARABIA HOLDING

BIO

Ahmad Arab is a distinguished executive leader and multi-disciplinary engineer with over 17 years of experience spanning public and private sectors. He is the founder and Chairman of DRB Arabia. An alumnus of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM), Harvard, and INSEAD, he has held pivotal roles at Saudi Telecom Company (STC), the Communication and Information Technology Commission (CITC), and the Saudi Arabia General Authority for Investment (SAGIA/MISA), culminating in his tenure as Deputy Minister of Strategic Planning and Business Intelligence at the Ministry of Tourism.

How did DRB come to life, and what inspired its creation?

DRB emerged from my realization that Saudi Arabia's tourism sector was on the verge of massive growth under Vision 2030. Rather than building a company from scratch, I sought out international tourism brands that weren't yet active in Saudi Arabia and adapted them to our local market. We developed the concept of a "tourism experience operator" to manage every aspect of the value chain, from design and development to operations and promotion, so that we could deliver the entire customer journey under one umbrella. Instead of competing in already crowded verticals like hospitality or entertainment, we focused on high-value niches like adventure, wellness, and eco-tourism, carefully tailoring experiences to Saudi Arabia's landscapes and cultural heritage.

How has Vision 2030 impacted DRB's growth and the broader tourism industry?

Vision 2030 has provided the foundation for an entirely new tourism ecosystem in Saudi Arabia. The government has prioritized regulatory support, investment incentives, and infrastructure development, creating an environment where private-sector players can thrive. One of the most significant shifts has been in the ease of doing business. Previously, obtaining permits, licenses, and certifications for tourism-related activities was a lengthy and costly process. Today, streamlined regulatory frameworks have made it far more efficient. Additionally, funding programs such as the Tourism Development Fund have provided access to capital, enabling companies such as DRB to scale at an accelerated pace. ✖



Image: The Travelling Panther

TRAVEL

As Saudi Arabia opens its doors to more foreign visitors, numerous Saudi-based travel companies are stepping up to showcase Saudi hospitality with modern innovation.



Bassam Almohammadi
CEO,
FLYAKEED



Muzzamil Ahussain
CEO,
ALMOSAFER



Turki Altheyeb
CEO,
SANA TOURISM

ESTABLISHED in 2017, FlyAkeed originally began as a B2C-exclusive platform dedicated to facilitating online flight reservations while incorporating enticing supplementary advantages to foster its initial user community. Over time, the company has evolved into a pioneering B2B2C amalgamated travel booking engine, catering not only to individuals but also to corporates of various sizes. Navigating through numerous strategic shifts, particularly amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic, FlyAkeed has played an indirect yet pivotal role in accelerating the digital transformation within the travel management domain for large corporations. FlyAkeed distinguishes itself by offering automated travel and expense solutions tailored for corporate entities and travel managers. Currently, our conversion rate stands at 34% for business travelers who have, according to our 4Q2023 statistics, ventured into booking leisure travel through our platform, and the goal in 2025 is to increase this to 70%. Although our focus is on the dynamic Saudi scene, we aspire to extend across the GCC and MENA region. We began aligning with Saudi Vision 2030 since inception, aiming to empower business travelers by offering them prosperity through our unique blended travel experience. Focused on attracting and assisting business tourists to the Kingdom, we identified an opportunity to enhance market access, particularly for SMEs. Now, we are committed to fostering growth for other start-ups by providing a marketplace, a customer management system, and a fintech solution.

ALMOSAFER is now Saudi Arabia's leading travel company with multiple B2B and B2C businesses. Our consumer business is fully digital and omni-channel, boasting physical locations, a call center, and a WhatsApp platform tailored to the local consumer. We have achieved significant growth, reaching USD3.9 billion in 2019. At Almosafer, we are constantly seeking to enhance our client experience by leveraging key partnerships to offer them the best-in-class services. By integrating Saudi Arabai's new national full-service carrier Riyadh Air's flight offering into our B2B and B2C platforms Almosafer, customers will enjoy a seamless digital-first hassle-free travel experience. Our collaboration involves an early partnership to experiment, innovate, and learn together. Partnerships like this are crucial for us, offering unique value propositions and access to special content and pricing. Together we can empower each other to realize our common vision of accelerating the growth of KSA's tourism sector by leveraging tech solutions to further support and boost business efficiency. Our focus remains on understanding and meeting customer needs. We prioritize providing top-notch services and solutions at competitive prices. By constantly evolving and enhancing our offerings and through our strategic partnerships, we ensure we stand apart from the other players by always putting our customers first. Our focus is on long-term sustainable growth, and we approach investments strategically, ensuring they align with our vision and timing.

SANA TOURISM is a destination management company (DMC) committed to creating unforgettable experiences for tourism in Saudi Arabia. From the moment tourists arrive until their departure, we meticulously craft their tourism experience. This includes developing the tourism product, investing in human capital, and enhancing the overall tourism experience. Among our achievements in the past year is our distinction as the first company to host a business meeting in Maraya Hall in AlUla. We also take pride in our rapid growth, positioning us as one of the fastest-growing companies in our industry. Furthermore, Sana Tourism stands out as the only DMC with a workforce comprised entirely of Saudi employees, showcasing our dedication to empowering local talent. The opportunities in the Saudi tourism sector are boundless, given its status as the largest country in the GCC and the one with the highest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region. These elements are not only considered valuable assets, but also integral components of Saudi Arabia's identity. Our key offering lies in our ability to tailor-make projects for each segment, country, and continent. This level of customization sets us apart from our competitors. Moreover, our people are our greatest asset. We invest in our local guides in each destination, ensuring sustainability and authenticity in our tours.



Image: The Travelling Panther

HOTELS: *Setting New Standards in Hospitality*

Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, driven by Vision 2030's ambition to position the Kingdom among the world's top tourism destinations. Major investments in infrastructure, global partnerships, and talent development are reshaping the hotel landscape, with both international brands and homegrown operators expanding across key cities and emerging leisure hubs. From ultra-luxury resorts along the Red Sea and boutique heritage stays in Diriyah to smart business hotels in Riyadh and Jeddah, the Kingdom is setting new benchmarks for service, design, and sustainability. This rapid evolution is not only meeting the needs of a growing influx of international visitors, but also nurturing a culture of excellence that reflects Saudi Arabia's modern identity. ✖



Image: Park Hyatt Jeddah



A CUT *above the rest*

Shangri-La Jeddah is elevating Saudi Arabia's luxury hospitality by blending world-class service, personalized experiences, and vibrant F&B and wellness offerings.

Brice Lunot
GENERAL MANAGER,
SHANGRI-LA JEDDAH

Shangri-La Jeddah is redefining luxury hospitality in Saudi Arabia. How is the hotel shaping the local landscape and enhancing quality of life?

Shangri-La Jeddah is the brand's first hotel in Saudi Arabia, owned by a prominent local family with extensive experience in the hospitality industry. Our priority is to deliver a seamless guest experience that goes beyond luxury to focus on meaningful interactions, refined service, and an unparalleled ambiance. A key aspect is our F&B offerings. Many of our visitors are not guests but come for dining and social experiences, positioning us as a cultural hub. Every day, we accommodate a large number of guests visiting our property, demonstrating our role as a leading gathering place in Jeddah. Moreover, we are committed to enhancing the city's lifestyle ecosystem by integrating high-end dining, wellness, and entertainment options that cater to both international and local clientele.

How do you adapt your services to meet evolving consumer expectations?

Our clientele is diverse, including corporate travelers, event attendees, and leisure guests. Jeddah is a vibrant city with a strong focus on events, particularly in sports and entertainment. We see significant demand from organizers and attendees of major cultural events such as the Red Sea Film Festival or the world class cultural event Islamic Arts Biennale Additionally, Jeddah is a preferred weekend destination for travelers from across Saudi Arabia and the GCC. The mix of corporate, leisure, and event-driven guests ensures a well-balanced business strategy. We are also noticing a shift in consumer expectations; guests today demand hyper-personalization, seamless digital experiences, and wellness-oriented travel. Our strategy revolves around continuously innovating our services, from AI-driven concierge experiences to immersive cultural programming.

Jeddah is increasingly hosting major international events. How does Shangri-La Jeddah leverage these opportunities?

Whether it is high-profile entertainment gatherings or sporting events such as Formula One and Formula E, our prime location near the Jeddah Corniche Circuit ensures we remain the hotel of choice. Motorsport is deeply embedded in the Kingdom's culture, and we capitalize on this by offering curated experiences tailored to racing enthusiasts and VIP guests. From exclusive lounges to tailor-made hospitality packages, we position ourselves as a premier choice for major events in Jeddah. Additionally, our ability to deliver bespoke event experiences, backed by our global luxury hospitality standards, sets us apart from other venues in the region.

> "We position ourselves as a premier choice for major events in Jeddah."

How does sustainability factor into Shangri-La Jeddah's operations, and what role does technology play in enhancing sustainability initiatives?

Shangri-La is committed to reducing its environmental footprint through multiple initiatives. A core focus is eliminating single-use plastics, which remains a priority for our global operations. Additionally, we integrate sustainability into our social responsibility programs. Every team member is required to dedicate a set number of hours to community engagement activities. It is not just about environmental impact; it is also about ensuring we positively contribute to the local ecosystem. Our approach is progress-driven, with continuous improvements year after year. Moreover, we are leveraging smart energy management systems, AI-driven predictive maintenance, and water conservation technologies to align with global sustainability benchmarks.

How does Shangri-La Jeddah integrate local talent into its workforce, and what upskilling initiatives are in place?

Saudi Arabia has a young and ambitious workforce, and it is imperative for us to integrate them into our operations. From the moment I arrived in the Kingdom, I experienced a level of warmth and hospitality that is unmatched. This natural inclination toward hospitality is a valuable asset, and we are harnessing it by actively recruiting and training Saudi talent. Many young professionals are eager to build careers in hospitality, and our training programs ensure they are equipped with the skills to excel. By fostering local talent, we ensure that Shangri-La Jeddah remains a culturally authentic experience for guests. Additionally, we have established specialized leadership training programs and digital learning platforms to equip Saudi professionals with the expertise needed for long-term career growth in the industry. ✖

BIO

Brice Lunot is a cultivated hospitality leader with over three decades of experience driving operational excellence and revenue growth across luxury resorts and hotels in iconic destinations resorts like the Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, and French Polynesia. His career is defined by resilience, innovation, and leadership. Lunot's passion for sustainability, talent development, and creating unique culinary and hospitality experiences has solidified his reputation as a visionary in the luxury hospitality sector.

شانغريلا جدة
SHANGRI-LA
JEDDAH

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EMBRACE the essence of personalized luxury at the award-winning Park Hyatt Jeddah, where sophistication meets tranquility. Set along the city's picturesque Corniche, with mesmerizing views of the Red Sea and the iconic King Fahad Fountain

PARK HYATT JEDDAH™

MARINA, CLUB AND SPA



EXCEPTIONAL *experiences*

Park Hyatt Jeddah has evolved to meet the demands of a diverse clientele by blending authentic Saudi culture with upscale luxury.

Sven Hoffmeyer
GENERAL MANAGER,
PARK HYATT JEDDAH

How has the positioning of Park Hyatt Jeddah evolved with the developments in Saudi Arabia?
With the recent boom in Saudi Arabia's tourism, Park Hyatt Jeddah has strategically evolved to meet the demands of a growing, diverse clientele. The hotel has upgraded its meeting spaces for business travelers and expanded dining options to include Mediterranean cuisine and special theme nights featuring Moroccan food and grill nights. It also integrates elements of Saudi culture within its design, creating a unique, luxurious atmosphere that attracts both international tourists and local guests.

With Vision 2030 positioning Saudi Arabia as a global tourism hub, how is Park Hyatt Jeddah aligning its growth strategy with this national vision?
Park Hyatt Jeddah is aligning its growth strategy with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 by focusing on sustainability, including the introduction of new solar panels for the hotel carts. The hotel has streamlined its operations to meet the needs of more international tourists and business travelers, supporting the Kingdom's long-term tourism goals. By offering a combination of upscale accommodations, fine dining, and top-tier event spaces, the hotel ensures an exceptional experience for all guests.

How is Park Hyatt adapting to changes in the luxury hotel market in Jeddah?
The luxury hotel market in Jeddah is evolving with trends such as cultural authenticity, sustainability, and technological innovation. Park Hyatt Jeddah is embracing these changes by offering a unique blend of local culture and luxury. The hotel's design reflects authentic Andalusian heritage, while its focus on authentic cuisine showcases the rich flavors of the region, creating a truly immersive experience for guests.

What unique experiences or services does Park Hyatt Jeddah offer that differentiate it from other luxury hotels in the region?
Park Hyatt Jeddah differentiates itself with an elegant blend of luxury and local culture. The hotel's authentic Andalusian architecture creates a unique atmosphere, offering stunning views of the Red Sea and King Fahd Fountain. Its culinary offerings reflect the rich flavors of the region, providing guests with an authentic dining experience. The hotel also offers unique wellness services, including the Aquamedic Pool, along with elegant event spaces, making it a perfect destination for both relaxation and special occasions.

How does the hotel cater to both local and international guests?
For local guests, the hotel offers a deep connection to the region through its authentic culinary offerings that celebrate Saudi flavors. For international visitors, it provides world-class services and global standard facilities, including advanced technology and luxurious amenities. The hotel's elegant event spaces are tailored to both business and leisure needs, accommodating corporate meetings as well as social gatherings. This combination ensures Park Hyatt Jeddah meets the diverse needs of Jeddah's growing business and leisure tourism market.

How has Park Hyatt Jeddah integrated technology to enhance guest experience?
Our mobile check-in enhances guest convenience, making the process more efficient and contactless. Our digital compendium allows guests to explore hotel facilities, dining options, experiences, and make requests directly from their mobile devices. These features are designed to offer convenience and enhance comfort at every step of the guest experience. Digital transformation is reshaping how we operate and engage with guests. It enables us to personalize every interaction, from tailored room settings to personalized dining recommendations, based on guest preferences gathered through data analytics. Our streamlined systems improve internal communication, making our operations more efficient and responsive.

How do you see the hotel evolving in the coming years to stay competitive?
In the next five years, Park Hyatt Jeddah plans to integrate more sustainable practices, focusing on reducing our carbon footprint and adopting energy-efficient technologies. We are also exploring more personalized guest experiences through digital platforms, like smart rooms and AI-driven concierge services. Additionally, we will focus on enhancing cultural engagement by offering unique experiences that showcase Saudi Arabia's rich heritage, creating a memorable stay for all guests.. ✖

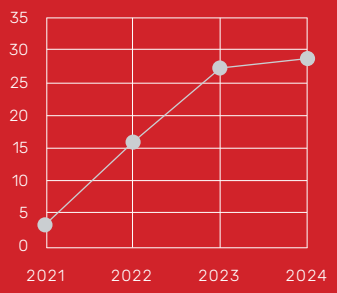
BIO

Sven Hoffmeyer is an experienced hospitality leader with a long-standing career in luxury hotels across Europe and the Middle East. He has been with Hyatt since 2004 and has led Park Hyatt Jeddah since 2019, focusing on strategic growth, operational excellence, and delivering outstanding guest experiences.

ROOM *at the Top*

The underlying internationalization drive enshrined in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has redrawn its diversified tourism sector.

TOTAL NUMBER OF INBOUND TOURISTS (MILLIONS)



SAUDI ARABIA's hospitality and entertainment drive has transformed the Kingdom, already a primary site of pilgrimage, into a must-see destination for leisure and exploration. The infrastructure supporting this momentum has yielded an impressive array of holiday opportunities, many surprising, including the mountain community of Soudah Peaks. In 2025, 17 major hotels and resorts will have opened their doors on the Red Sea, such as in the ambitious Shura Island project, and across key cities.

It follows that the world's premier hospitality groups have woven themselves into the nation's tapestry of cultural heritage, natural wonder and futuristic urban landscape. Luxury, of course, looms large, but with the added twist of what industry insiders call hyper-personalization. Industry behemoth BWH Hotel Group, for one, the owner of WorldHotels, Best Western, and SureStay, aims to operate 5,000 hotels worldwide by 2027. BWH intends to launch seventy hotels across the region by that year ranging from mid-range facilities to large-scale resorts, of which around two-thirds are destined for Saudi Arabia.

Accor is the pre-eminent hotel operator in the Kingdom. Vice President of Operations KSA, Moustafa Manoon explains how, "...our developments create long-term value for local communities [as for Accor] hospitality is [...] about embedding sustainability, fostering local communities, and nurturing talent." The 'Tamayyaz by Accor' nationalization and talent development program is poised to recruit and train over 3,000 Saudi professionals by 2030."

Accor taps into domestic and foreign tourism with a portfolio encompassing, "key tier-one cities like Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, and Madinah, while rapidly growing in secondary markets such as Khamis Mushait, Wa'ad Al Shamal, Qassim, AlUla, and Al Baha." Also tapping into the MICE market, Manoon adds that while the segment is not new, "...recent cultural and regulatory changes have unlocked its potential [and so with] landmark events such as Expo 2030 and the FIFA World Cup our upcoming Sofitel in Riyadh will feature the city's largest convention center, [while] many of our existing properties, such as Mövenpick Riyadh, already have extensive MICE capacity."

Saudi Arabia's tourism industry has piqued sufficient international interest to guarantee that going forward, pilgrimage tourism, however profound in nature, is but one aspect of the wider picture. ✖



The Bab Samhan hotel in Diriyah designed in the Najdi architectural style

جـــريـــد

JAREED

◆ RIYADH ◆

Your Home Away From Home

Jareed is a Saudi-owned Hotel in Riyadh's Hittin district, offering 58 elegantly designed rooms and suites that combine modern luxury with authentic Saudi heritage. Located in The Boulevard, Jareed guests have direct access to the city's top dining, shopping, and entertainment, and are close to major business and cultural landmarks.

Jareed features personalized service, wellness facilities including Jimam Spa, Two dining concepts: The Living Room, a social and work-friendly space, and Morini, a New York style Italian restaurant with international acclaim. Jareed offers many event spaces such as The Private Office and Mezzanine, catering to both corporate and social gatherings.

Blending tradition, contemporary design, and exceptional hospitality, In The Heart of Riyadh Jareed Hotel offers business and leisure travelers a refined home-away-from-home experience that truly represent the generosity and warmth of Saudi hospitality.











Prince Turki Bin Abdulaziz Road The Boulevard, Riyadh 11321

+966 11 400 4141 Info@Jareedhotels.com www.Jareedhotels.com



AUTHENTIC *stays*

Jareed Hotel has positioned itself as the leading boutique luxury destination in Riyadh, offering guests authentic Saudi hospitality, elevated design, and personalized service.

Eman Abdullah
GENERAL MANAGER,
JAREED HOTEL

How would you describe Jareed Hotel's evolution since its establishment in 2018?
Since its establishment under NMR Hospitality in 2018, Jareed Hotel has evolved into one of Riyadh's leading luxury boutique hotels. We have focused on creating a distinctive guest experience rooted in authentic Saudi hospitality, elevated design, and personalized service. After opening, we enhanced operational excellence and strengthened our brand presence, earning the trust of our guests.

How does Jareed Hotel approach leadership, and what inspires your vision for blending luxury with Saudi identity?
At Jareed Hotel, leadership is rooted in authenticity, collaboration, and attention to detail. We lead by example, empowering our teams to deliver personalized service that reflects true Saudi hospitality. My vision is inspired by the richness of our culture blending modern luxury with local identity through design, service, and guest experience. We aim to create a destination where guests feel the warmth of Saudi values in a refined, modern way.

How do you create guest experiences that reinforce cultural authenticity and modern comfort?
Jareed Hotel thoughtfully blends Saudi heritage with modern elegance across every touchpoint. Our design incorporates local textures, patterns, and art to create a sense of place, while maintaining a modern, luxurious atmosphere. Through curated cultural programming, partnerships with local artisans, and authentic culinary experiences at our restaurants, we immerse guests in Saudi identity. Every detail from warm, personalized service to the ambiance aims to offer comfort rooted in culture.

How have your collaborations amplified the hotel's visibility, and how do you evaluate alignment with both brand and local tourism objectives?
Strategic partnerships have played a vital role in enhancing Jareed Hotel's visibility. We have collaborated with local tourism authorities, high-profile events, and luxury lifestyle brands to position the hotel as both a destination and a cultural touchpoint, such as during the Riyadh Season. In addition, the support we received from the Saudi Tourism Authority and our involvement with the WTTC perfectly align with our mission to showcase Saudi hospitality in a modern, elevated way. We prioritize brand alignment, cultural relevance, and meaningful guest experiences that all contribute to the broader vision of Saudi tourism, and we are proud that our efforts have been recognized with the Luxury Art Boutique Hotel award.

How is the hotel adapting offerings to stay competitive?
Jareed Hotel primarily targets domestic affluent travelers, GCC, and high-level business clients who value privacy, personalization, and refined hospitality. Our boutique luxury positioning allows us to offer curated experiences from exclusive dining and wellness to discreet business services. To stay competitive, we continuously adapt by enhancing digital guest services, tailoring packages to evolving travel trends, and offering culturally relevant experiences that resonate with our key segments all while maintaining the intimate, high-touch service that sets us apart.

In a city expanding its luxury hotel inventory, how does Jareed differentiate itself?
In a competitive luxury market like Riyadh, Jareed Hotel stands out through its boutique scale, personalized service, and deep cultural connection. Unlike larger chains, we offer an intimate, tailored experience where every detail reflects Saudi identity from design elements to local hospitality practices. Our location on Riyadh Boulevard gives us a unique lifestyle edge, while our curated dining, art, and guest experiences create a sense of place that resonates with modern luxury travelers seeking authenticity and exclusivity.

How do you assess the current state of the Saudi hospitality market?
The Saudi hospitality market is evolving rapidly, driven by Vision 2030 and a growing appetite for luxury, culture, and lifestyle experiences. We are witnessing strong demand from both domestic and international travelers, particularly in the boutique and experiential segments. Guests today seek more than just accommodation; they seek connection, storytelling, and personalization. While the market is expanding, there is still room for growth in areas like wellness integration, culinary innovation, and culturally rooted experiences. For boutique hotels like Jareed, this presents a unique opportunity to lead with authenticity, creativity, and service excellence. ✖

BIO

Eman Abdullah is the General Manager of Jareed Hotel in Riyadh and a distinguished leader in Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector. With more than 14 years of experience in the tourism and hotel industry, she has successfully opened six hotels and built a reputation for excellence, resilience, and people-focused leadership. Known for her ability to blend authentic Saudi hospitality with luxury experiences, Eman continues to set new benchmarks in guest satisfaction.



LEADING *with purpose*

With Riyadh redefining hospitality through Vision 2030, Marriott is poised to lead this evolution with experiences that inspire and connect.

Nader Ibrahim
CLUSTER GENERAL MANAGER,
RIYADH MARRIOTT HOTELS

Leading one of the largest hotel clusters in the city, how would you characterize the current state of the hospitality industry in the capital?
Riyadh's hospitality scene is growing at an incredible pace. The city is fast becoming a hub for business and lifestyle travel, driven by Vision 2030's ambitious transformation. For us at Riyadh Marriott Hotels, this period is both exciting and challenging; we are raising service standards, developing local talent, and crafting experiences that connect with the city's evolving spirit.

With giga-projects and major developments such as Diriyah, New Murabba, and the King Abdullah Financial District reshaping Riyadh's urban fabric, how are these projects influencing demand for new hospitality concepts and guest experiences?
These projects have elevated expectations. Guests now seek cultural depth, comfort, and authenticity. Each of our five hotels plays a role in meeting that demand, from the Riyadh Marriott and MEA Convention Center serving business travelers to the Diplomatic Quarter hotels offering a refined, community-focused stay, and the Courtyard catering to modern, social guests.

What key trends will define the Riyadh hotel market in the coming years?
We are seeing a rise in "bleisure" travel, where business meets leisure. The local weekend market is stronger than ever, and technology and sustainability are key factors influencing guest choices. Personalization will continue to define success in Riyadh's future.

How does the Riyadh cluster fit into Marriott's broader strategy for growth and consolidation in the Kingdom?
Our five-hotel cluster forms the backbone of Marriott's presence in the capital. Each hotel fulfills a different purpose, from the flagship Riyadh Marriott to the Diplomatic Quarter properties known for lifestyle and community experiences. Together, we reflect Marriott's strategy of consistency, quality, and brand strength.

What are the group's expansion plans, and how do these brands complement existing properties in Riyadh?
Marriott's growth in Saudi Arabia is ongoing, but our Riyadh cluster is focused on refining what we already do best. We are investing in upgrades, technology, and training to ensure our hotels remain leaders in service and experience.

What strategies are you implementing to maximize synergies while ensuring each property maintains its own unique identity and value proposition?
We share resources and best practices while keeping each brand distinct. NOMAS reflects Saudi culture, Cucina offers authentic Italian dining, and LDN Circus delivers modern, social energy. This diversity allows each property to shine within one cohesive strategy.

How is Marriott positioning its F&B portfolio to compete not just with other hotels, but also standalone restaurants and global dining brands entering the market?
F&B is one of our cluster's strongest pillars. Outlets such as NOMAS, Cucina, and LDN Circus compete directly with top city venues by focusing on creativity, authenticity, and consistently memorable experiences.

What is your vision for Marriott to set new benchmarks in F&B, whether through introducing signature dining concepts, collaborating with international chefs, or creating experiential offerings that resonate with both Saudi and international guests?
Our goal is to make dining an experience, not just a meal. We combine global expertise with local inspiration to create restaurants that stand out by blending culinary innovation with authentic Saudi and international flavors.

How does Marriott adapt its menus and culinary strategy to meet evolving consumer expectations in Riyadh?
We prioritize locally sourced ingredients, balanced menus, and waste reduction. Healthier options and responsible dining are part of our daily operations across all properties.

Looking ahead, how central will F&B be to Marriott's long-term strategy in Riyadh?
F&B will remain central to who we are. Beyond revenue, it is a key part of how we express culture and creativity. Through innovative dining and meaningful experiences, we aim to help make Riyadh a top culinary destination. ✖

BIO

With over 25 years of global hospitality experience, Nader Ibrahim is a visionary leader recognized for redefining Saudi Arabia's hospitality and culinary landscape. As Cluster General Manager in Riyadh, he has combined operational excellence with cultural authenticity, creating award-winning concepts such as NOMAS, Cucina Riyadh, and LDN Circus, each reflecting the Kingdom's identity through innovation and storytelling. His leadership is deeply people-centric, focusing on empowering Saudi talent and women in leadership while driving exceptional guest satisfaction and business performance.







FIVE STAYS, *three flavors, one timeless story*

IN THE HEART OF Saudi Arabia's vibrant capital, where the echoes of heritage blend seamlessly with the rhythm of modern ambition, five distinguished Marriott destinations unite under one name to tell a single, inspiring story—the story of Riyadh. Each property captures a different facet of the city's personality, creating a collective experience that celebrates Riyadh's transformation into a global destination of culture, commerce, and hospitality.

From the timeless grandeur and stately presence of the Riyadh Marriott Hotel, a landmark of the city's hospitality legacy, to the refined comfort and residential elegance of the Marriott Executive Apartments Riyadh Convention Center, every stay promises distinction and familiarity. The Marriott Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter Hotel offers a serene sanctuary surrounded by lush landscapes, blending modern design with cultural authenticity, while the Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter Marriott Executive Apartments embody sophistication, privacy, and a sense of belonging for extended stays. Completing this exceptional collection, the Courtyard by Marriott Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter pulses with the city's dynamic spirit, providing the ideal setting for business and leisure travelers seeking energy, connectivity, and comfort.

Together, these five destinations represent more than a cluster of hotels—they symbolize a shared commitment to excellence, cultural connection, and heartfelt Saudi hospitality. Every property within the Riyadh Marriott Cluster offers a distinct experience while maintaining Marriott's global standards of service and quality. Whether for a short business trip, a long-term stay, or a weekend retreat, guests are welcomed with warmth, care, and a consistent promise of excellence, reflecting the true spirit of modern Arabia.

Culinary artistry takes center stage across the cluster, with signature venues such as NOMAS, Cucina, and LDN Circus, each presenting a unique culinary narrative inspired by craftsmanship, creativity, and community. These restaurants transform dining into an immersive experience that celebrates both local and international flavors.

More than a collection of addresses, the Riyadh Marriott Hotels Cluster stands as a reflection of a city in motion—where tradition and innovation meet, and every stay becomes a chapter in Riyadh's timeless and ever-evolving story of excellence. ✖

HOTELS

The Saudi hospitality sector is rapidly transforming under Vision 2030, with both global and homegrown hotel brands working to expand their portfolios and champion local talent development.



Moustafa Manoon
VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS KSA, ACCOR



Jeremy Canivet
GENERAL MANAGER, THE JEDDAH EDITION



Mahmood Khalifa
ASSET MANAGER, ALESAYI HOSPITALITY COMPANY (AHC)



Ahmad Altheeb
GENERAL MANAGER, HOTEL MADAREEM

ACCOR was the first international hotel operator to receive a formal investor license in Saudi Arabia, a clear demonstration our long-term commitment to the Kingdom. We have been here for more than 30 years, and since 2012, we have we have operated a dedicated regional office in the country. In 2023, we expanded into a larger office to support our growing portfolio, and we are already preparing to open a second office in Riyadh. These steps reflect our ambition to remain close to our hotels, our teams, our investors, and our owners. We are strategically expanding our portfolio across key tier-one cities like Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah, and Madinah, while rapidly growing in secondary markets such as Khamis Mushait, Wa'ad Al Shamal, Qassim, AlUla, and Al Baha. This balanced approach allows us to capture both domestic and international demand while directly contributing to Vision 2030 objectives. Our plans include opening 47 more hotels by 2030, effectively doubling our current portfolio of over 46 hotels.

THE JEDDAH EDITION seamlessly blends understated luxury with personalized service, offering curated experiences that resonate with international guests' expectations of sophistication while honoring the local culture through thoughtful design, bespoke F&B offerings, and meaningful community engagement. Its state-of-the-art technology, impeccable service, and strategic location also make it an unparalleled choice for hosting high-profile gatherings and events in the city. Our versatile and stylish areas provide unique and flexible settings, making it an attractive option for companies looking to host exclusive meetings and events. Sustainability is seamlessly integrated into our operations and guest experiences. Our commitment is reflected in energy-efficient systems, the use of locally sourced materials, and eco-friendly room amenities that minimize our environmental footprint.

OVER the last 20 years, the Middle East has emerged as a rapidly growing hospitality market. Even with an increasing number of hotels, occupancy rates remain robust and are forecasted to grow steadily over the next few decades. Our involvement in this space includes developing projects like our Jabal Omar property, a unique blend of modernity and tradition with unobstructed views of the Holy Mosque. This project introduces the first lifestyle brand in Mecca, MGallery by Accor, setting a new benchmark for the market. The reception to this project has been remarkable. Our competitive advantage lies in two pillars. First, we are a Saudi company with deep local expertise and access to firsthand market data. This positions us to deliver at a level comparable to international players while understanding the nuances of the Saudi market. Second, our holding encompasses 56 companies, providing us with comprehensive data and resources. This allows us to benchmark investments and execute projects confidently, ensuring satisfaction for guests, residents, and owners.

MADAREEM Hotel aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 by offering an exceptional hospitality experience that reflects the national ambition of boosting tourism and attracting visitors from around the world. We focus on providing high-end services that cater to both local and international guests while continuously enhancing our offerings to meet global hospitality standards. Additionally, we are committed to investing in local talent and developing training programs to elevate skills within the hospitality sector. The hotel boasts a luxurious design that blends contemporary style with authentic Arabian hospitality, offering a high level of privacy and personalized services. Our hotel provides diverse accommodation options, world-class dining experiences, and a fully equipped wellness spa. We take pride in delivering a comprehensive hospitality experience that meets the needs of both business and leisure travelers.



Basel Talal
MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR KSA, KUWAIT & LEVANT, RADISSON HOTEL GROUP



Tony Coveney
CLUSTER GENERAL MANAGER, ST. REGIS RED SEA RESORT & NUJUMA, A RITZ CARLTON RESERVE - MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL



Vipin Khattar
GENERAL MANAGER, THE RITZ-CARLTON JEDDAH

RADISSON Hotel Group has been in KSA since 2002. Today. Saudi Arabia makes up 50% of our Middle East portfolio, with over 44 operating hotels and under development across primary, secondary, and holy cities. Vision 2030 has significantly shaped our strategy. Our alignment with Vision 2030 includes expanding our portfolio, developing local talent, and embracing digitalization, for example, with our Radisson+ initiative, which offers a flexible personalized experience with seamless Check-In, AI-enabled service chats, and omnichannel e-concierge capabilities. Initially, our growth targeted major cities like Riyadh, Jeddah, and the Eastern Province. Following the vision's guidance, we expanded into secondary cities with strong demand drivers, such as Jizan, Najran, Buraidah, and Yanbu. Talent development is critical, given that 60% of the population is under 30, with 55% being female. The increased openness to gender equality has also been beneficial. For instance, in 2017, we hired Saudi Arabia's first female general manager in Jeddah, who has excelled. Our people are our biggest asset.

THE DESTINATION covers 32,000sqkm, about the size of Belgium, and remains largely untouched. It is an archipelago of 90 islands, only four of which are developed so far. The St. Regis Red Sea was the first to open, followed closely by Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve. Both are on mono-islands, which mean there is a single resort per island, ensuring absolute privacy and exclusivity. Launching the St. Regis in 2023 was a landmark moment, and in May 2024, we opened Nujuma, the seventh Ritz-Carlton Reserve worldwide and the first Reserve in the Middle East. The Reserve brand is unique; each property is deeply embedded in its location. For us, that meant using natural materials, contemporary architecture, and Saudi cultural elements like sadu patterns in textiles and carved wood. The name "Nujuma" comes from the Arabic word for stars, inspiring experiences such as guided stargazing with our resident astronomer. Where St. Regis is positioned as an island of celebration, Nujuma is about culture and nature.

THE RITZ-CARLTON Jeddah embodies the essence of luxury, heritage, and world-class service. From the moment guests arrive, the experience is curated to reflect Saudi culture while upholding the unparalleled Ritz-Carlton standards. Beyond aesthetics, we are integrating our offerings into Saudi Arabia's growing tourism framework by focusing on business travel, events, and premium leisure experiences. Our key business contributors are MICE, corporate groups, government delegations, and high-net-worth leisure travelers. We operate one of the largest convention spaces in the region, spanning 60,000sqm, which makes us the venue of choice for high-profile events. We see a shift in consumer behavior, with an increasing preference for digital convenience. To address this, we have integrated mobile check-in, in-app dining orders, and AI-driven guest service tools to provide seamless experiences. We also leverage data analytics and guest preference tracking to tailor our offerings. Additionally, our investment in training ensures our team delivers a level of service that meets the expectations of an elite clientele.



Ahmed Ereiba
GENERAL MANAGER,
SOFITEL SHAHD AL MADINAH HOTEL

BIO

Ahmed Ereiba has 30 years of experience in luxury hotels, promoting exceptional experiences for guests and colleagues while delivering outstanding results that exceed expectations of all stakeholders. He was named Saudi Arabia's Top 10 General Managers in 2021 by the Hotelier Middle East Power 100 List and was nominated for the Best Hotel Manager in 2016 by the Hotelier Middle East. Before Sofitel Shahd Al Madinah, he previously managed Raffles and Fairmont Makkah and Burj Al Arab Jumeirah Dubai. He holds a master's of management, a master certificate in food service management, and an advanced certification in hospitality operations from Cornell University in the US.

How does Sofitel Shahd Al Madinah ensure a consistently high level of in-room comfort?

Ensuring a high level of in-room comfort is a continuous process that lies at the heart of delivering Sofitel's promise of refined luxury and well-being. Our approach begins with direct guest interaction before, during, and after their stay. I personally engage with guests to understand their comfort levels in real time and gather insights from post-stay surveys and online reviews. This helps us identify areas where we can enhance the experience immediately. From an operational standpoint, we use standardized assessments to measure comfort through key criteria such as mattress quality, bedding softness, temperature control, soundproofing, and ambiance. Staff training also plays a crucial role. Our teams are trained to anticipate guest needs, observe comfort indicators, and act proactively to ensure every detail contributes to relaxation. Finally, technology and data analytics enhance personalization. Smart room controls allow guests to customize lighting and temperature, while data insights help us predict and adapt to preferences, creating a truly exceptional, personalized in-room experience.

What major changes in hospitality have you observed over the years?

In the last two decades, the hospitality industry has undergone a remarkable transformation driven by digital innovation, shifting guest expectations, and a greater emphasis on personalization, wellness, and sustainability. Hotels have had to rethink every aspect of their operations, from technology integration to cultural sensitivity, to remain competitive and relevant in an increasingly dynamic market. The digital transformation has been the most significant game changer. The rise of online booking platforms, mobile check-ins, and smart room technologies has streamlined operations and empowered guests with convenience and control. Travelers today now seek highly personalized, meaningful experiences rather than standardized luxury. Wellness and sustainability have become key decision drivers, with guests seeking eco-friendly practices, healthy dining, and restorative environments. ✖





A hotel in the historic Al Ula area

Image: Francesco Lorenzetti

MAXIMIZING *opportunities*



Hyatt Place Riyadh stands out for its prime central location, strong Hyatt brand loyalty, and smart balance of quality and value, backed by its alignment with the city's expanding tourism and lifestyle-driven hospitality boom.

Anas Abdallah
GENERAL MANAGER,
HYATT PLACE RIYADH AL SULAIMANIA

What differentiates Hyatt Place Riyadh within the city's rapidly growing hospitality landscape?
Hyatt Place Riyadh is distinct in several ways. First, our location is a major advantage, as we are right in the heart of Riyadh, close to the primary business districts, major financial hubs, and key leisure destinations. The hotel is just a few minutes away from Tahlia Street, one of Riyadh's most vibrant lifestyle zones. Second, our brand positioning as part of the Hyatt portfolio plays a crucial role. We are proud to carry the Hyatt name, which represents global consistency, service excellence, and an established loyalty network. Our guests benefit from World of Hyatt, one of the industry's most respected loyalty programs. This alone creates an ongoing relationship between our hotel and thousands of repeat travelers who recognize Hyatt for its reliability and attention to detail. Finally, we focus on value for money. Hyatt Place Riyadh provides the full Hyatt experience, namely premium service, comfort, and design, at more accessible rates compared to traditional five-star properties. We are neither the most expensive nor the least; we sit in the middle where guests feel that every riyal they spend translates into tangible comfort, quality, and care. In a market that is becoming increasingly competitive, this balance of location, quality, and value defines our differentiation.

Riyadh has become a major destination for events, exhibitions, and conventions. How do you position Hyatt Place to capture a greater share of that market?
Events are one of the most exciting growth drivers for Riyadh's hospitality sector, and we have structured our sales and marketing approach to maximize this opportunity. Our sales team actively monitors the city's event calendar and establishes direct contact with the organizers and exhibitors of major conventions. They not only target the companies hosting or participating in these events but also reach out to attendees through proactive campaigns. Our proximity to the Riyadh Exhibition Center is a key advantage. Beyond our local efforts, we also benefit from Hyatt's global sales network, which has offices in key feeder markets such as Dubai, Jeddah, and London. These regional and international sales teams promote Riyadh as a destination and our hotel as an ideal option for both business and event travelers. Our strategy is twofold: local agility supported by global reach. This combination helps us attract delegates, exhibitors, and event planners from around the world who are discovering Riyadh's rapidly expanding events ecosystem.

How do you see the labor market evolving in Saudi Arabia' s hospitality sector?
The Kingdom's hospitality sector is growing at an unprecedented pace, though recruitment remains a challenge, particularly for operational roles in housekeeping, F&B service, and kitchen operations. These are essential positions that require both technical skill and service mindset, and historically they have relied on expatriate labor. However, we are seeing significant progress. The Ministry of Tourism has made substantial investments in training Saudi nationals, sending them abroad for specialized programs and developing hospitality academies within the Kingdom. This is a long-term solution, and it is already producing positive results. Hyatt Place Riyadh is proud to employ an increasing number of Saudi professionals, especially in front-office, HR, and finance departments. Local talent brings cultural understanding and pride, which enhances the guest experience. It also helps us meet localization targets and reduces the cost of overseas recruitment.

What are the key opportunities shaping Riyadh's hospitality sector today?
The opportunities in Riyadh are vast. The city has transformed from a government and business capital into a multifaceted destination. The biggest opportunity lies in domestic tourism and lifestyle hospitality. Saudis today are traveling within their own country more than ever, exploring Riyadh, Jeddah, and AlUla as leisure destinations. This has created strong weekend demand, which was previously concentrated in international travel. Another major opportunity is the government's investment in human capital. The Ministry of Tourism's training programs are crucial. For us as hoteliers, this means greater stability, lower costs, and deeper engagement with the local community. ✖

BIO

Anas Abdallah is a seasoned hospitality leader with over two decades of distinguished experience with Hyatt, marked by a progressive career journey from operational roles to executive leadership. With a strong academic foundation in hospitality and business, holding a bachelor's degree in hotel and tourism management and an MBA, he has consistently leveraged his expertise to drive performance and excellence. He serves as General Manager of Hyatt Place Riyadh Al Sulaimania, where he oversees all aspects of hotel operations, guest experience, and business development.


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RIYADH OLAYA

حياة ريجنسي الرياض العليا

PRESERVATION

Saudi Arabia's environmental leadership is advancing rapidly through institutions that work to protect biodiversity, restore ecosystems, expand protected areas, and implement large-scale initiatives to drive Vision 2030's sustainability goals.



Mohammed Qurban
CEO,
NATIONAL CENTER FOR WILDLIFE (NCW)

NCW is deeply committed to supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, prioritizing biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use, and wildlife protection, all of which are integral components of vision's environmental sustainability goals. Extensive field surveys, specialized studies, and accessible databases bolster a robust knowledge base on wildlife, supporting societal values and economic development. Furthermore, it fosters cutting-edge research and innovation in wildlife conservation by collaborating with universities and research centers. In the last few years, NCW has made significant advancements in various areas of wildlife conservation and environmental management, driven by national expertise and international collaboration. The Red Sea Decade Expedition, for instance, a biodiversity exploration project in the Red Sea, presented many unique discoveries including more than 10 blue holes, promoting both scientific discovery and sustainable tourism. Additionally, NCW has led rehabilitation efforts in the Red Sea, restoring degraded habitats and enhancing coastal resilience through innovative techniques like revitalizing coastal turtle nesting sites and wetlands. In alignment with the 30x30 initiative, NCW has expanded protected areas, notably including the UNESCO-recognized Uruq Bani Ma'arid protected area, designated as a world heritage site, thus safeguarding critical habitats. Moreover, over 8,000 animals of endangered and threatened fauna have been reintroduced to restore ecological balance.



Talal Alharigi
CEO,
IMAM ABDULAZIZ BIN MUHAMMAD ROYAL RESERVE (IARDA)

IARDA works to achieve its vision by maintaining the ecological balance and restoring biodiversity to create an environmental place for all members of society. To achieve our mission to create a natural haven rich in natural and historical resources, which contributes to improve the quality of life for the individual and society. As Saudi Vision 2030 has laid solid foundations for preserving and protecting the environment, we seek to achieve environmental sustainability by enhancing community awareness, preserving plant species, enhancing vegetation cover and reintroducing endangered wildlife species. IARDA has signed an MoU with the National Center of Meteorology, concerned with climate monitoring through the Regional Center for Climate Change. We also worked on studying the natural environment in the two reserves and identify sites of high natural value and challenges that may affect them and local communities accordingly. The reserve was divided into three different protection zones to regulate the conduct of various environmental, tourism and economic activities. In addition, IARDA works to raise environmental awareness to reduce practices that disturb the ecological balance and affect the natural resources in the two reserves, so we have launched media campaigns urging positive behaviors towards the environment and raising environmental awareness.



Khaled Alabdulkader
CEO,
NATIONAL CENTER FOR VEGETATION COVER AND COMBATING DESERTIFICATION (NCVC)

NCVC was established in 2019 with the goal of increasing green areas to combat desertification and rehabilitating degraded ecosystems. We are responsible for the management of vegetation that exists on rangelands; forest areas in mountains, valleys and mangroves; and natural habitat in National Park. We work actively to involve the public, private sectors and individuals in the development of vegetation cover and combating desertification. We have developed long term strategies, plans, projects and programs to increase vegetation cover and combat desertification, to conserve natural resources and biodiversity, to preserve plant genetic resources, and to find innovative solutions to respond to our environmental challenges and opportunities. The biggest project we are working on now is the 10 Billion Trees project under the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI), an ambitious national initiative that is focused on combating climate change, improving quality of life, and protecting the environment for future generations. NCVC has developed a masterplan to plant and naturally regenerate 10 billion trees, which will be equivalent to rehabilitating 40 million ha of land over several decades. This masterplan targets greening every area of the Kingdom including cities and towns. We have a comprehensive plan to increase tree canopy cover across all Saudi cities.

SPORTS SECTOR SNAPSHOT

SOURCE: SPORTSTECHX

Total market size (2024)	SAR32BN
CAGR (until 2030)	18%
Contribution to non-oil GDP	1.6% (3% BY 2030)
New jobs expected by 2030	136K

RECENTLY HELD EVENTS

SOURCE: TBY RESEARCH

Diriyah E-Prix	Camel Racing
WBA Clash on the Dunes	The Saudi Tour in Al Ula
World Tour Championship Finals 3x3	Major Soccer League Cup Final
Hail International Endurance Horse Race	Saudi Aramco Golf Women's Championship
Dakar Rally	Hail Baha Rally
AlUla Desert Polo	Saudi Cup Horse Race
Titan Mountain Bike Racing	ATP Diriyah Tennis Cup
Saudi Arabian Formula 1 Grand Prix in Jeddah	

TOP EVENTS BY SPORT (2022 ONWARD)

SOURCE: SPORTSTECHX



- **14.81%** Football
- **12.96%** Boxing
- **14.81%** Other combat sports
- **14.81%** Motorsport
- **7.42%** Golf
- **35.19%** Other



Image: SMC

THE BUSINESS OF CHAMPIONS: Sports as a Catalyst for Economic Diversification

THE GLOBAL *game*

Saudi Arabia is redefining the business of sport, transforming it from spectacle into strategy. In line with Vision 2030, sport has become one of the Kingdom's most dynamic tools for economic diversification, uniting investment, tourism, infrastructure, and soft power under a single ambition: to make Saudi Arabia a global sporting hub. At the heart of this transformation is the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which has positioned itself as a global powerhouse in sports and entertainment. In 2025, PIF strengthened its international presence through a landmark partnership with FIFA, becoming an official partner of the FIFA Club World Cup 2025. The Fund's sports subsidiary, SURJ Sports Investment, expanded its global footprint with a USD1 billion acquisition of DAZN, the sports streaming giant, integrating media capabilities into Saudi Arabia's growing sports ecosystem. Meanwhile, PIF's multi-billion-dollar commitment to LIV Golf and its talks to invest in World Athletics' new commercial rights entity, valued at over GBP500 million, demonstrate how the Kingdom is investing across the full value chain, from governance and infrastructure to digital content and rights management. Domestically, PIF's Entertainment, Leisure & Sports Program is reshaping the physical landscape of Saudi sport. The newly launched Kingdom Arena in Riyadh, with seating for more than 26,000 spectators, is designed as a multipurpose venue for sports, concerts, and major cultural events. Yet the centerpiece of this long-term vision lies ahead: the 2034 FIFA World Cup, which Saudi Arabia will host for the first time. Preparations are already underway for more than 15 new or upgraded stadiums across five host cities, including Riyadh, Jeddah, Al Khobar, Abha, and NEOM. The flagship King Salman International Stadium in Riyadh will accommodate over 92,000 fans, while the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Stadium in Qiddiya and the futuristic NEOM Stadium, built into The Line, will embody the Kingdom's blend of innovation and ambition. These projects, which are part of a USD20 billion investment, extend far beyond the tournament itself, anchoring tourism, jobs, and sustainable urban growth. At the same time, Saudi Arabia is charting new territory in digital sport. The 2025 Esports World Cup, held in Riyadh, brought together more than 2,000 players and 200 clubs from over 100 nations, competing across 25 titles for a record USD70 million prize pool. The event broke global viewership records and drew millions of visitors, positioning Riyadh as a new epicenter for gaming, technology, and entertainment. Together, these developments reveal a coherent strategy: to use sport as both a commercial catalyst and a cultural bridge. Whether through football, golf, or esports, Saudi Arabia is turning competition into commerce and champions into symbols of national transformation. In doing so, the Kingdom is proving that the future of sport is not just to be played, but to be built. ✖



FEAT *of strength*

The Ministry of Sport is building up a young, competitive sporting nation by expanding participation, attracting global investment, and embedding sport as a core driver of Saudi Arabia's transformation.

Bader AlKadi
VICE MINISTER OF SPORT

How does the National Sports Strategy translate the goals of Vision 2030 into actionable outcomes for the sector?
Vision 2030 has placed sport at the heart of quality of life, economic diversification, and global connection, and the National Sports Strategy is how that vision is being delivered in practice. Participation has risen from 14% in 2017 to 58% in 2024, already ahead of the 2030 target of 40%, with nearly an equal split between women and men. The number of sports federations has more than tripled from 32 to 97, creating access across every sport and region. Today, as a result, we have literally millions of first-time athletes taking their first steps toward a happier, healthier, and more active lifestyle. However, the transformation goes far beyond participation. Saudi Arabia has built the ecosystem behind it: talent pathways, academies, coaching, private clubs, licensing reforms, and facilities designed for long-term growth. That shift is why 11 major clubs have already been privatized, the SPL has its first foreign owner, and investment is flowing into gyms, academies, and sports SMEs. Since 2018, more than 150 international events have attracted over 3.5 million fans, not just to watch, but to inspire participation, stimulate tourism, and build industry value. From Dakar and Formula E to E-sports and football, every event serves a bigger purpose.

What role do you envision sports playing as a pillar of Saudi Arabia's socioeconomic transformation in the next decade?
We believe in the power of sport as a force for good. It is a beating heart at the center of a deliberate ecosystem that will help drive our economic and social progress and ultimately influence and unlock the potential of our people and multiple sectors over the next decade. More than 20,000 jobs have already been created in sport and adjacent industries, and that number is expected to double as new facilities, events, academies, and services scale up. In terms of industry structure, two-thirds of Saudi sports federations are less than 10 years old, which means the growth trajectory is long and adaptable. This accelerates demand for certified coaches, sports tech companies, performance specialists, venue operators, and content creators. Tourism is another major dimension. The sports economy is closely tied to the Kingdom's target of 150 million annual visitors by 2030, with new sports cities, entertainment zones, and mega-projects like NEOM and Qiddiya designed to integrate tournaments, annual festivals, lifestyle sports, hotels, and culture.

What are the ministry's priorities in attracting FDI into the sports ecosystem?
We work closely with the Ministry of Investment to target partners that bring capital, capability, and long-term sector value. Forums like the Middle East Sports Investment Forum (MESIF) have become key platforms to convene global investors, rights holders, operators, and innovators around opportunities in clubs, infrastructure, sports tech, events, wellness, media, and tourism-linked projects. Our priorities are clear: we want FDI that accelerates commercialization, builds capacity, and helps us deliver a sustainable sports economy. That includes co-owning clubs, operating facilities, developing mixed-use venues, investing in startups, hosting elite events, and establishing regional HQs in the Kingdom. The model is deliberately structured so foreign investment supports, rather than replaces, national talent and industry. When seasoned clubs, leagues, performance experts or media groups enter the market, they do so with the expectation of building Saudi capabilities in coaching, analytics, sports science, content creation, technology, and event operations.

How do grassroots sports and community initiatives help create a sustainable sports culture nationwide?
The ministry believes that a sports culture is not developed stadiums alone but in the hearts of our communities. There is no doubt our events inspire us, bringing energy and impact and jumpstarting new interest; however, it is the subsequent access, coaching, and local competition that turns inspiration into participation and nurtures future talents as part of a growing and sustainable industry. Every major event is built to create something lasting that people can play, join, and build on long after the spotlight moves. ✖

BIO

Bader AlKadi was appointed Saudi Arabia's Vice Minister of Sport in 2021, following roles as CEO of the then-General Sports Authority and Advisor to the Minister. Among his main responsibilities include leading the National Sport Strategy and revamping the Ministry's organizational and financial management practices. A seasoned C-suite executive at major regional and international companies for over 17 years, he also currently represents the ministry on multiple cross-sectorial government initiatives and is a committee member of the country's Quality of Life Program.



Princess Haifa Bint Mohammed Al Saud
VICE-MINISTER OF TOURISM, MINISTRY OF TOURISM OF SAUDI ARABIA



Ibrahim Yousef Al-Mubarak
ASSISTANT MINISTER OF INVESTMENT

GOVERNMENT *support*

Backed by strong government support under Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is uniting sports, tourism, and investment to build a dynamic ecosystem to drive economic diversification and sustainable growth.

How are sports, tourism, and investment working together under Vision 2030 to strengthens Saudi Arabia's position as a premier destination for international events?

HAIFA BINT MOHAMMED AL SAUD Success starts when the private sector takes the lead by enablement and by continued support. When I was in the Ministry of Sports and we worked on the Formula E, we saw at the time how much interest the event gathered. That was the first time the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted the Formula E, and we received visitors from over 70 nationalities by. This was in 2017, and we now have over 160 nationalities coming to the event. We saw how important tourism is. When we welcomed people, we looked into all the details: where to go, what to do, what services to provide. Once tourism was enabled through a sports activity like Formula E, we understood the wider perspectives horizons. While visiting the Osaka Expo in Japan, I saw a man wearing an Al-Nassr jersey. Ambitions truly have no limit. People will come to Saudi Arabia, explore, and want to be part of our events. Today, Saudi Arabia receives 14 million people coming to see sporting events in the country. These 14 million people spent about SAR22 billion; however, it is not just about the volume of spending; the impact is huge. Sports and tourism should work in tandem. We are looking at how to attract spectators to our events, while the tourism sector is working on bringing more and more visitors. One cannot work without the other. We work closely with the Ministry of Investment to facilitate investors coming into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Sport started from scratch by establishing the program, determining the best time for Formula E, for competitions and championships, from A all the way to Z. We worked with several entities, including the event committee headed by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. We even created full travel and accommodation packages comprising tickets, hotel rooms, and transportation, so that visitors do not have to make five or six bookings. We worked on promoting these events with the Ministry of Sports from the design phase all the way to implementation. Ever since the Kingdom announced its bid to host the World Cup, applications for hotel licenses have increased by 390%. Many now understand how important it is to invest in tourism infrastructure.

IBRAHIM YOUSEF AL-MUBARAK Vision 2030 is based on national initiatives, strategies, and programs where all stakeholders are engaged. One of the most important things we need to understand is how to activate this vision. The National Investment Strategy is at the core of this, focusing on attracting and developing local and global investments. The strategy is built on four main tracks. The first is identifying and developing investment opportunities so investors can understand what is available. The second is working closely with investors, including marketing, promotion, and listening to their needs through initiatives like the Voice of Investors and the Council of Investors. The third track is providing financing solutions for investors and investment opportunities. And the fourth is enhancing the competitiveness of the investment environment through reforms in regulations and legislation. We engage with international organizations and associations to ensure we are creating an attractive environment for investors. To date, we have implemented more than 800 reforms since the launch of Vision 2030. These reforms have positioned Saudi Arabia as a leading investment destination. For example, the number of foreign investors has increased 10-fold, from 4,000 to over 40,000. We had a target of attracting 500 regional headquarters; today, we have exceeded that. In the sports sector specifically, we are working closely with the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Tourism to develop and promote investment opportunities. Today, we have identified 88 investment opportunities within the sports sector, including infrastructure, logistics services, fintech, sport tech, marketing, media, and sports tourism. It is not just about attracting capital; it is also about knowledge transfer and developing local capabilities. We want investors to bring their expertise to the Kingdom, contributing to long-term sustainable growth. When it comes to regulations, Saudi Arabia is highly competitive in comparison to the region. The reforms have made it easier for both local and foreign investors to do business here. Privatization, bankruptcy laws, and investment-related legislation have all been updated to support our ambitions. Ultimately, the sports sector, like education and health, is part of a broader long-term investment strategy. The economic impact of sports extends far beyond direct financial returns; it supports tourism, hospitality, aviation, and contributes to improving the quality of life in the Kingdom. ✖

**Remarks from the panel "Government integration to achieve investment growth goals in sports" at the Sports Investment Forum (SIF), April 2025.*



HEALTHY *growth*

SFA continues to drive Vision 2030 by expanding access to sports, empowering women and youth, and building community programs to make physical activity a part of everyday life.

Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud
PRESIDENT, SAUDI SPORTS FOR ALL FEDERATION (SFA)
FOUNDER & CEO, KBW VENTURES
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, ARADA

As President of SFA, how do you define the federation's role in achieving the Vision 2030 target of raising weekly sports participation to 40%?

SFA has played a pivotal role in developing and empowering communities and individuals through our sports initiatives across Saudi Arabia. We have worked to increase access to fitness and sporting opportunities for all Saudis, including citizens, residents, men, and women. SFA has surpassed the initial 40% target, with over 48.2% of people across the country now practicing physical and sporting activities at least 30 minutes a week. Even more significantly, female participation in physical activity increased by over 170% in five years. We are pleased by the impact that SFA is having in transforming Saudi Arabia into a global center of health in alignment with Vision 2030's Quality of Life Program.

What are the main strategic priorities of SFA today, and how have they evolved since its establishment?

Since SFA's establishment in 2018, we have created a clear roadmap to reach out to all communities and society members in Saudi Arabia to meet their specific needs and encourage them to have more active lifestyles. At home, we have made it an objective to serve diverse segments such as youth, women, and vulnerable groups. We have also increased our reach through global and local partnerships, working with individuals and organizations who share our commitment to a healthy, happy, and more physically active nation. From playgrounds and sports arenas to homes and backyards, we want to build and sustain a more active Saudi Arabia. To do this, our core aspirations include accelerating physical and mental wellbeing, leading in sustainability and inclusion, pioneering community sports through empowered groups, ensuring operational stability, and building a global reputation.

What impactful initiatives have you launched to encourage everyday participation across Saudi society?

SFA has made it a priority to encourage more activity across all demographics in Saudi Arabia. To do this, we have focused on developing initiatives at a grassroots level. Our Neighborhood Clubs program has demonstrated the success we can have when we extend an initiative into community-level sports. We now have 45 clubs offering over 10 sports, such as tennis and basketball, across more than 20 cities. The clubs have more than 43,000 memberships, with a 55% male and 45% female representation, and we are encouraging participation at a massive scale.

> "By 2030, we aim for 64% of adults to participate in 150 minutes of moderate activity weekly."

How is SFA working to make sports and fitness more accessible to everyone?

Accessibility for women, youth, and underserved communities lie at the heart of our efforts. We have expanded our offerings by introducing activities tailored to the preferences, interests, and lifestyles of women, as well as corporate wellness programs that address cultural and demographic preferences. We have. For youth and young adults, we have set out to inspire a generation to build physical activity habits for life and develop physical literacy. We are reaching them through family-focused events, programs, and campaigns that are tailored to leverage trends for sport. We have implemented region-specific initiatives: Move with Us is in over 12 cities, while Active has introduced youth tournaments and games in cities such as Abha, Tabuk, Dammam, and Buraydah, among others. We collaborate with over 1,700 community sports groups to reach vulnerable populations, ensuring programs address barriers such as location and cost.

Looking ahead to 2030, what are the key milestones for SFA, and how will you measure success?

Looking ahead, we are excited about deepening our partnerships with the public and private sector for enhanced opportunities and increased awareness as we do more to support a healthier and more active society through sports. We seek partners in the private sector that will support the development of sports facilities across the Kingdom and to achieve our objectives. By 2030, we aim for 64% of adults to participate in 150 minutes of moderate activity weekly and 21% of youth to engage in 60 minutes daily. ✖

BIO

Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud is a businessman, investor, and technology enthusiast who champions clean energy, healthy living, and entrepreneurship. As a venture capitalist, his investments in technology span several different disciplines including fintech, agtech, aviation and transportation technologies, energy technology, biotechnology and health technologies, entertainment and broadcast technologies, and more. The founder & CEO of KBW Ventures, he works across several tiers and levels of the business. In the real estate and property markets, he serves as Executive Vice Chairman & Co-founder of Arada. Beyond business, Prince Khaled supports the Kingdom's Vision 2030 health and wellness goals through his role as President of the Saudi Sports for All Federation.



Image: oday jamil moari



NATIONAL *pride*

SACF aligns with Vision 2030 by using cricket as a vehicle for community engagement, youth and women's development, and further economic diversification.

Prince Saud bin Mishal Al-Saud
CHAIRMAN,
SAUDI ARABIAN CRICKET
FEDERATION (SACF)

How does SACF align its strategy with the broader ambitions of Vision 2030, especially in terms of community engagement and youth development?
Cricket may look new in the Kingdom, but it has been played here since the 1960s. With nearly a third of our population coming from cricket-playing nations, the demand is already strong. As the world's second most-watched sport, cricket offers us a unique opportunity to contribute to the non-oil economy, drive tourism, and support the Quality of Life Program. At the same time, we are introducing structured pathways in schools and communities to give young Saudis their first experience of the game and build the next generation of talent.

How do you ensure SACF's domestic initiatives connect with Saudi youth and families?
It is not an easy challenge, but it is essential for the sport's future. That is why we are working through schools and universities, as well as through our Social and Schools Programs, to give young Saudis formats that are fun, accessible, and competitive. These initiatives make cricket a natural part of community and family life.

What infrastructure development, including cricket grounds, academies, and facilities, is underway, and how SACF is working to professionalize the sport within the Kingdom?
The Kingdom already has over 110 cricket grounds, but many facilities remain basic. The passion for the game is clear, which shows that demand is not the issue but supply. That is why we are prioritizing modern infrastructure at every level, from community hubs to international-standard stadiums. Three world-class venues are already planned across major cities, with some under construction in partnership with the private sector. Alongside this, academies such as Arkan Sports, which is privately owned and successfully operating, serve as models we aim to replicate in other regions. On the professional side, we are creating a clear pathway from grassroots to elite. In the next one to two years, the Kingdom will launch its own franchise league, while also hosting sanctioned international tournaments such as the DP World ILT20. To bridge the gap, several of our national players have already been drafted into ILT20 teams, gaining invaluable exposure and new income opportunities. These developments will soon make high-level cricket a regular feature here in the Kingdom.

Inclusivity has been one of your key priorities. Can you elaborate on your domestic programs and initiatives encouraging participation among women and different communities?
Cricket is naturally inclusive, and our mission is to make it accessible to everyone across the Kingdom. Through a range of programs, including Schools Cricket, Social Cricket, Community Cricket, and the National Cricket Championship, we are engaging thousands of players across all regions. These initiatives connect youth, families, and residents from all backgrounds. A standout example is NEOM's cricket program in partnership with the Rajasthan Royals, which engages employees and residents within the NEOM development. We are proud to support that initiative and are replicating similar community-based models across other regions of the Kingdom. Women's participation remains a core priority. We are building clear pathways for girls and women from school level to national representation, ensuring equal access to coaching, facilities, and competition. The women's game is growing at an unprecedented pace globally, and our goal is for the Kingdom to contribute to that growth by developing players who can compete and represent our cricketing future.

What legacy do you hope SACF to leave beyond the game itself?
Our shared vision is to make the Kingdom a world-class cricketing destination, fully aligned with Vision 2030 and contributing to the non-oil economy. More than just a sport, we see cricket as a platform for cultural diplomacy, community connection, and national pride. Through international partnerships, domestic leagues, and grassroots programs, we are using the universal language of sport to connect people and inspire a new generation. The legacy we aim to build is not only about winning matches; it is about contributing to a more open, connected, and ambitious Kingdom. ✖

BIO

Prince Saud bin Mishal Al-Saud is an entrepreneur, investor, and a leading figure in Saudi Arabia's sports landscape. As Chairman of SACF, he has driven the game's rapid growth, expanding to 23 regional associations, over 700 teams, and more than 120,000 participating annually since 2020. He also serves as CEO of AlManahil Holding, a diversified group spanning real estate, retail, lifestyle, and wellness. Through strategic partnerships such as the DP World ILT20 and hosting the 2025 IPL Auction in Jeddah, Al-Saud is positioning the Kingdom as a new global hub for cricket, contributing to its non-oil GDP and long-term transformation story.



UNLOCKING *capabilities*

SEF has played a role in developing Saudi Arabia as a global leader in esports by focusing on building a world-class, professionally governed ecosystem that nurtures talent from grassroots to elite levels.

Rawan AlButairi
CEO,
SAUDI ESPORTS FEDERATION (SEF)

Esports is often described as the one sport in which Saudi Arabia is leading. What defines that leadership in strategic terms?
Esports sits at the intersection of technology, entertainment, and sport. The global games market will generate USD188.8 billion in 2025, a 3.4% increase YoY. In traditional sports, we are catching up with long-established global leaders; however, esports is different. Saudi Arabia entered at the right moment and now shapes the conversation. We are not merely participating but set benchmarks for how a young, digitally native population can turn a passion into a world-class industry.

Though much of Vision 2030 focuses on moving from localization to globalization, you have argued that esports requires the reverse as well. Why is that dual approach important?
Historically, we sought to export Saudi capabilities abroad. Today, we must also localize global content to unlock the domestic and regional market. Most leading games are in English; publishers rarely prioritized Arabic. By investing in localization such as Arabic interfaces, culturally relevant narratives, and partnerships with manga creators, we can deepen engagement at home and in the wider MENA region, which revenue reached USD5.6 billion, with Saudi Arabia recording the highest games revenue in the region (USD1.19 billion in 2024). That dual approach of taking Saudi talent global while bringing global IPs closer to our culture creates a larger, more inclusive marketplace.

You were appointed CEO at a time of accelerating growth. What is your overarching vision for SEF?
My goal is to consolidate what has been built while preparing the ecosystem for its next phase. The federation was created in late 2017 with modest grassroots tournaments, though the pandemic unexpectedly accelerated our trajectory. Since then, we have developed a sophisticated, multi-tier, multi-genre national league that is unique in the region and rare globally. Our mandate is to identify talent early, develop them to professional standards, and support national teams with world-class coaching, nutrition, and performance management. This complete cycle from grassroots to national representation ensures that the Kingdom competes and wins on the international stage. Equally important is the cultural shift: esports is no longer a pastime, but a strategic sector supported by visionary leadership.

Saudi Arabia's strategy for esports inevitably depends on strong international partnerships. What is your approach to global collaboration and IP development?
Publishers are at the heart of our ecosystem; without their IPs no league can attract top talent or global audiences; however, gaming tastes differ by geography: what is popular in Riyadh may not be as popular in Seoul or Berlin. Our strategy, therefore, balances two priorities: serving domestic audiences while integrating global titles. We designed a two-tier national league: an elite tier built around titles with strong domestic followings, and a challenger tier that introduces globally popular titles to the local community. By demonstrating to publishers how we successfully scaled our elite tier, we make a compelling case for licensing new titles and investing in our ecosystem. We also place high emphasis on institutional credibility. We are among the world's top three esports federations in terms of governance standards. We operate with an 80-strong full-time professional team supported by board-approved procurement policies, HR processes, and compliance frameworks. This professionalism reassures international partners that Saudi Arabia is a reliable long-term collaborator.

How does the federation leverage Saudi Arabia's leadership role within the GCC and Arab world?
HRH Prince Faisal, in addition to his different roles in Saudi Arabia, also chairs both the Arab Esports Federation and the GCC Esports Federation, while I serve as secretary-general of both. This unified leadership allows us to harmonize strategy across the region while aligning with publishers, coordinating tournament calendars, and sharing best practice in governance and infrastructure. Our leadership believes that regional progress benefits everyone: growth in any Arab or GCC country strengthens the collective ecosystem. By hosting regional leagues and opening our national league to global competitors, we give talent across the region platforms on which to train, compete, and achieve international success. ✖

BIO

Rawan AlButairi is an accomplished Saudi executive with over 15 years of leadership experience across government, finance, policy and international affairs. She was appointed CEO of SEF in August 2025. She also serves as assistant secretary-general of the GCC and Arab Esports Federations, strengthening regional collaboration across 21 nations. She previously held senior roles at the Communications, Space & IT Commission, the Ministry of Finance during Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency, and Saudi Aramco. An MBA graduate from IESE Business School and holder of a BSc in finance (honors) from the University of Maine, Rawan began her career in banking before moving into leadership roles across both the public and private sectors. She is also the co-founder of the WEF Global Shapers Al Khobar Hub and founder of Edugo Arabia.



Image: Saudi Motorsport Company

SPORTS *federations*

With strong government backing, judo, boxing, and jiu-jitsu have rapidly transformed from niche pursuits into nationwide movements and international success.



Abdulaziz Al Bassam
PRESIDENT,
SAUDI JUDO FEDERATION

WHEN I ASSUMED this role in 2021, the landscape was modest: 21 clubs, around 20 domestic competitions, and a focus limited to sending one or two athletes to international events. There was virtually no structured system, minimal investment in refereeing development, and female participation was nonexistent. Since then, we have expanded to over 110 clubs nationwide. We established national teams for cadets and juniors for the first time, launched school-based Judo programs in partnership with the International Judo Federation (IJF), and increased participation across all levels. In 2024 alone, 54 athletes competed in international events. We have also significantly grown the women's segment; today, there are more than 4,500 women practicing Judo in Saudi Arabia. National competitions have expanded to 33 annually. Our strategy focused on removing barriers and building enablers. Judo is a respectful, values-driven sport that promotes self-defense, discipline, and physical fitness. These attributes have made it widely acceptable for women and girls. We also understood the need for role models and structured pathways. Today, Saudi has professional female Judo athletes receiving salaries and competing internationally. We also take pride in the achievements of Saudi athletes like Tahani Alqahtani, who has been a trailblazer for women's Judo in the Kingdom. Our long-term ambition is to match the number of male and female Judokas.



Abdullah Alharbi
FORMER PRESIDENT,
SAUDI BOXING FEDERATION

THE SAUDI Boxing Federation is keenly focused on cultivating a culture deeply embedded in boxing, aiming to not only produce Olympic champions but also to establish a comprehensive support system for these athletes. Our strategic vision encompasses several key areas: significantly increasing participation in the sport of boxing across the Kingdom, institutionalizing the operations within the federation to enhance our effectiveness and prestige both locally and internationally, ensuring financial sustainability through strategic government and private sector involvement, and notably, elevating the competitiveness of our athletes through intensive training programs and local/international competitive opportunities. The rising popularity of boxing has opened up numerous business and sponsorship opportunities. To note, Boxing has grown from 97 boxers registered with the federation to almost 2,000 male and female boxers registered and the number of clubs adapting boxing jumped from around four to currently 87 clubs and more than 70 private boxing gyms registered in with the federation in a span of four years. Entities can engage with the sport on multiple levels; for instance, by sponsoring high-profile events or training camps, companies can gain substantial exposure and align their brands with the discipline and excellence that boxing represents. Additionally, by partnering with the Saudi Boxing Federation on grassroots initiatives, businesses can connect with a wider audience.



Rakan Alfehaid
CEO,
SAUDI JIU-JITSU FEDERATION

WE ARE FORTUNATE to be part of the Road to Podium initiative, which gives us visibility. That said, community education has required a creative, multi-faceted approach. In our early days, our competitions only offered medals and trophies. Today, the reward pool is SAR27 million. That completely changed the perception. Suddenly, major football clubs like Al-Hilal are showing interest in our sport, investing in multi-sport strategies. Additionally, we are launching a first-ever Super Fight series with invited elite athletes, supported by sponsors, clubs, and even podcast platforms who want to cover the events. Our goal is to partner with every private club, especially those with a martial arts focus. Their performance, coaches, and training programs reflect directly on the national federation. We are also targeting a formal partnership with the Ministry of Education, which holds the key to long-term mass participation and talent identification. We are already making strides. At Princess Nourah University (PNU), we are launching a program dedicated to female students, which includes internship opportunities and curriculum integration. This is not just about building athletes but about building a national culture around the sport. In 2024, we participated in the World Championships and secured 10 medals, one gold among them. It was the result of calculated investment in technical staff and athlete preparation.



COMMITTED *to success*

CAA Portas has played a pivotal role in Saudi Arabia's sports transformation by combining its global expertise with local partnership.

Donal McElwee
MANAGING PARTNER,
CAA PORTAS

What is the firm's strategic approach to supporting Saudi sports during this transformative period?
CAA Portas first started supporting sports development in the Kingdom in 2015, and were one of the first international companies to come to help with the sports transformation. Within a few years, we were fortunate to be involved the Vision 2030 process, where the aspirations for sport were formally announced. Strong local partnership, bringing both global best practices and deep local knowledge, has helped ensure sustainable change. Hiring and developing local talent has been one of our central priorities, with many alumni now in senior roles across the sports ecosystem. We have supported our clients on both their strategies and the implementation of their plans. This focus on strategy and execution has facilitated significant milestones, including a substantial increase in physical activity levels, increased sports investment and the award and delivery of major sporting events that have elevated the Kingdom's profile.

Could you provide insights into some of these initiatives and their broader impact on the Kingdom's sports ecosystem?
The Saudi sports sector has been growing and achieving new milestones since we started in the Kingdom 10 years ago. Supporting Saudi Arabia's successful bid to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup was a particularly notable achievement for all involved. The award showcases confidence in the Kingdom's capacity to host global sporting spectacles, and will act as a catalyst for infrastructure development and capacity building. Supporting the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee with their planning and delivery of the Saudi Games was a notable project in its contribution to local talent development across multiple sports. As a golfer, our partnership with Golf Saudi who are driving the Kingdom's golf aspirations, is particularly exciting as a fully functioning golf ecosystem starts to develop. These initiatives underscore our commitment to delivering projects that not only achieve immediate objectives, but also contribute to the long-term vision of establishing Saudi Arabia as a vibrant and inclusive global sports hub.

Which emerging areas is CAA Portas focusing on to drive innovation and growth within Saudi Arabia's sports industry?
In its aspiration to deliver a thriving sport sector, the Kingdom seeks to be at the forefront of innovation and global trends. For us, this means helping our clients with, for example, data and analytics. In addition to management consultants, we are now hiring dedicated data scientists to support our clients increasing demand for data-led projects. These projects include strategic competition design, supply/demand modelling, social and economic return on investment, and sporting performance reviews. Our clients in Saudi are increasingly looking to invest in or partner with providers of the latest tools and solutions in the growing sports tech and AI space, as well as ensure their organization is set-up to leverage these tools effectively in decision-making. In addition, one of the goals of the sports sector is to lower the dependency on the public sector and increase the private sector's participation.

What is the firm's vision for its future role in the Kingdom's sports ecosystem, and how does it plan to contribute to the realization of Vision 2030?
As we complete a decade in Saudi Arabia, our vision is aligned with the Kingdom's ambitious sports objectives. We aspire to continue serving as a trusted advisor and strategic partner, bringing our global expertise while remaining deeply attuned to the local cultural and socio-economic landscape. Our focus will be on fostering a sustainable and diversified sports ecosystem characterized by robust private sector engagement, world-class infrastructure, and a culture of sports participation and engagement. Importantly, as part of CAA Sports, we are uniquely placed to help our Saudi clients as they move from the strategy and planning phase of the Vision 2030 process, into operations and commercialization. ✖

BIO

Donal McElwee has worked on over 200 engagements in the Saudi sports sector since 2015 and leads CAA Portas, a management consultancy serving senior leaders in sport. Prior to CAA Portas, McElwee worked in general management consultancy and corporate law in the UK and US. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School, The Wharton School, and University of Glasgow.

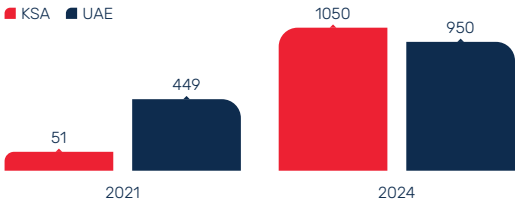
INFOGRAPHIC
CAA Portas

PADEL *to the metal*

Padel courts are an increasingly common sight across Saudi Arabia, and the sector is growing in tandem with wider efforts to promote healthier lifestyles and inclusive participation.

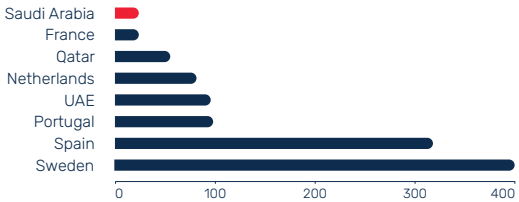
COURT GROWTH

Over recent years, Saudi Arabia has experienced rapid growth in the number of padel courts compared to regional best-in-class peers.



PADEL COURTS PER MN POPULATION

Despite rapid recent expansion, there is still significant growth potential in Saudi Arabia.



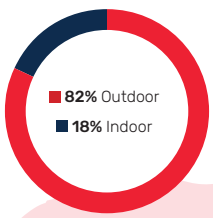
FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Padel has the highest female participation rate among sports in Saudi Arabia. Tournaments typically see around 10% female participation, while many clubs report up to 50% female players.

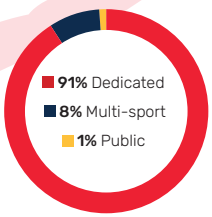


KEY STEPS TO SUSTAIN PADEL MOMENTUM IN SAUDI ARABIA

Optimization of utilization through more indoor clubs, geared for summer use, and opening hours suitable for local habits

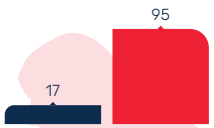


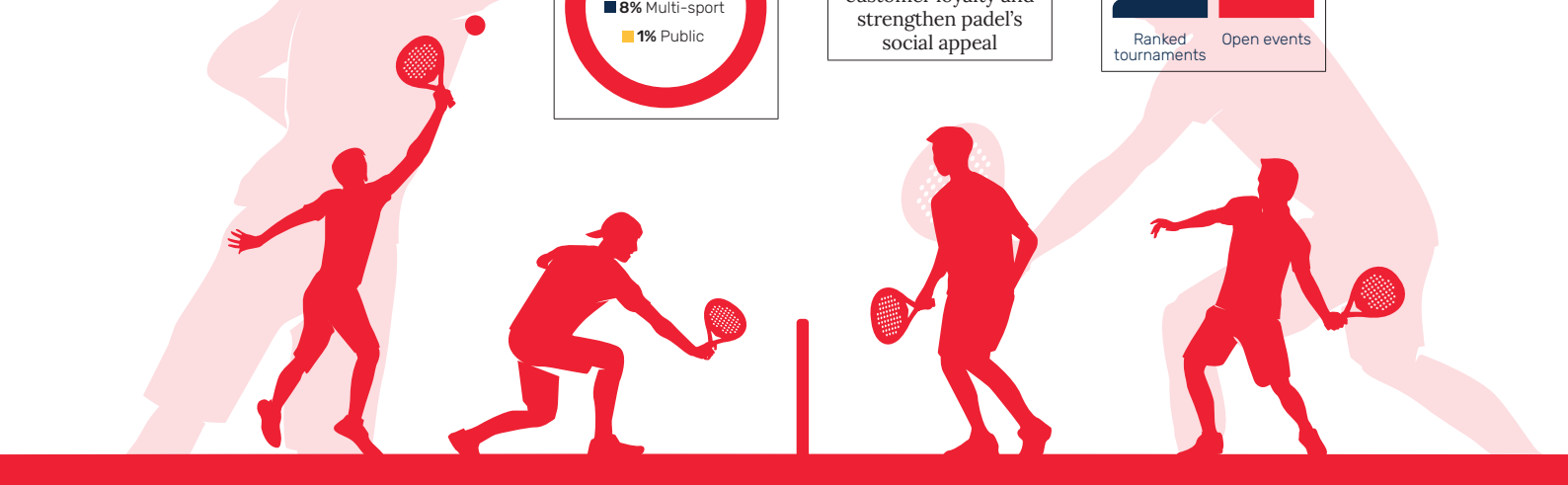
Diversification of club types. Padel supply in Saudi Arabia has been driven predominantly by private investors and dedicated facilities. Expanding into multi-sport complexes and public venues will enable further growth by attracting new user demographics



Diversification of revenue streams. As customer preferences evolve and expectations rise for a more comprehensive experience, Saudi padel facilities should develop diversified and engaging offerings beyond traditional pay-to-play models. Memberships, coaching programs, F&B services, merchandise, and wellness options can enhance customer loyalty and strengthen padel's social appeal

Growth of tournaments and events. With over 112 events held in 2023—highlighted by the Riyadh P1—further investment in events will broaden audience reach, increase visibility, and foster stronger community engagement across KSA's padel ecosystem





CAPITALIZING *on success*



A dedicated entity driving the growth of motorsport in Saudi Arabia, SMC has hosted major motorsports events like the Formula1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, Dakar Rally, and Extreme E series.

Mansour AlMokbel
CEO,
SAUDI MOTORSPORT COMPANY (SMC)

Saudi Arabia has rapidly positioned itself as a global hub for motorsport. How does SMC contribute to this transformation?
SMC plays a pivotal role in the Kingdom's vision to elevate sports and entertainment as key pillars of economic and social growth. The broader strategy for sports transformation in Saudi Arabia is guided by the National Sports Strategy, which focuses on mass participation, talent development, and elite performance. Our role is to build a comprehensive motorsport ecosystem, from hosting premier international events like Formula One, Dakar Rally, and the World Rally Championship to fostering local talent and motorsport culture. We work alongside the Ministry of Sport and the Saudi Automobile & Motorcycle Federation (SAMF) to ensure that our initiatives contribute to the national agenda of diversification, investment attraction, and youth engagement. Our commitment extends beyond hosting events; we are cultivating a sustainable industry that generates long-term economic impact, job creation, and infrastructure development.

What is the strategic significance of securing long-term agreements for motorsport events in Saudi Arabia?
Long-term agreements, such as our 10-year deals with Formula One, WRC, and Dakar Rally, reflect Saudi Arabia's deep commitment to motorsport. These agreements provide stability and confidence for investors, sponsors, and partners, ensuring consistent growth and engagement with international stakeholders. Such commitments allow us to develop world-class circuits and expand motorsport infrastructure, including karting and grassroots programs that nurture the next generation of Saudi drivers. By securing these prestigious events, we are positioning Saudi Arabia as a must-visit destination for global motorsport fans and businesses while promoting tourism and investment in the Kingdom.

How is the company positioning itself as a leading investment platform?
Motorsport is more than just a spectacle; it is a business-driven industry that attracts significant investment. We view Saudi Motorsport Company as an ideal platform for corporate partnerships, sponsorship, and private sector collaboration. Our events provide global exposure, allowing brands to reach millions of viewers worldwide while also engaging with local audiences. Additionally, we actively seek out PPPs to develop motorsport facilities and infrastructure. In the last few years, we have witnessed an increasing number of international companies setting up operations in Saudi Arabia to support our growing motorsport industry. Our objective is to create win-win opportunities where both local and global brands can leverage our platforms for commercial and strategic growth.

What initiatives do SMC have in place to develop local talent in motorsport?
One of our core missions is to inspire and cultivate the next generation of Saudi talent. With SAMF, the Federation, we work across racing and non-racing streams. Starting with our mega event portfolio we have roles through event delivery, operations and commercial. A Saudi team has been growing and continues to do so since 2021. Saudi nationals with all careers can be part of the journey and eco system we are building both as graduates or more experienced professionals supporting both with internship programs and internal training. On the racing side, through initiatives with SAMF such as the Saudi Next-Gen program, we are actively identifying and nurturing young drivers. Our karting circuits serve as training grounds, and we have seen an increasing number of Saudi men and women entering competitive racing. The impact of these initiatives is already visible, as we recently had Saudi drivers achieve historic milestones, including podium finishes in international racing series. Additionally, our collaboration with international motorsport teams ensures that young Saudi talent receives world-class training and exposure.

What role does infrastructure development play in the growth of the Saudi motorsport industry?
Infrastructure is fundamental to sustaining long-term motorsport growth. Our facilities, including the Jeddah Corniche Circuit, have already established Saudi Arabia as a leading venue for motorsport. Accessibility is key, and our goal is to ensure that motorsport enthusiasts across Saudi Arabia have access to proper training facilities. These developments not only drive talent discovery but also contribute to economic diversification by creating business opportunities around motorsport-related industries. ✖

BIO

In addition to serving as CEO of SMC, Mansour Almokbel is also General Manager of Investments in the Ministry of Sport. Prior to joining the Ministry of Sport, he served as general director for delivery in the Ministry of Defense as well as program director in the Ministry of Housing. Almokbel has also worked in a number of leadership and management roles at several private and semi-government companies, including Saudi Technology Development and Investment Company and Advanced Electronics Company. He received a bachelor's degree in software engineering from King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals and an executive MBA from the George Washington University. He also has a certificate in management from London Business School and a managing successful programs MSP Practitioner Certificate.



Image: Saudi Motorsport Company



QUALITY *first*

UNIMAC has strategically expanded into entertainment infrastructure, including a new niche in sports facilities like racetracks. This focus aligns with the objectives of the Quality of Life program, broadening its impact across various sectors.

Fadi Aristo Hatoum
CEO,
UNIMAC

What significant changes have occurred in the Saudi construction industry over the decades, and how has UNIMAC adapted to these evolving standards and expectations?

As a third-generation builder deeply embedded in the Saudi Arabian market, my family initiated our construction legacy in the early 1970s, culminating with the founding of UNIMAC in 1979. We started contributing to the local construction sector in 1972, with a primary focus on highways and roadways. In those formative years, our projects were propelled by a rapidly growing population and the strategic reinvestment of oil revenues into essential infrastructure. Saudi contractors have made significant strides in delivering high-quality infrastructure projects on time and within government budgets. Advanced techniques brought by foreign contractors are currently being adopted by a large number of Saudi domestic contractors. UNIMAC now embodies a new era of contractors, dedicated to a progressive and quality-centric approach to construction. This evolution not only enhances the durability and efficiency of our projects, but also ensures that future infrastructure development more closely aligns with the strategic long-term goals of the Kingdom. This shift is further supported by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which operates with a business-like focus. Collaborating with PIF, rather than solely with government entities, has fostered greater awareness and a shift in mindset among contractors, who now recognize the need to elevate their capabilities to participate in large-scale projects.

How did UNIMAC's strategic decision to specialize in motorsport infrastructure impact its operations?

We are a dynamic company committed to continuous reinvention and growth. With over 45 years of expertise in infrastructure across multiple industries, UNIMAC has, since 2018, strategically expanded into entertainment infrastructure, including a new niche in sports facilities like racetracks. This focus aligns with the objectives of the Quality of Life program, broadening our impact across various sectors. One pivotal point in our journey was choosing to specialize in motorsport, as exemplified by our construction of the Formula E racetrack in Diriyah in 2018. Such specialized projects carry significant risks, largely due to the stringent deadlines set by the leadership, including the Crown Prince. The construction of the Formula E racetrack required an intensive three-month, non-stop effort, involving even our chairman on a daily basis. Many contractors shied away from this challenge; however, we recognized it as a unique opportunity to position UNIMAC distinctively in the market. This opened the door for UNIMAC to build the Jeddah Corniche Circuit—the home of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix and the first Grade 1 circuit in the Kingdom, hailed by Formula One racecar drivers as the "golden standard of racetracks." While the region hosts many general infrastructure contractors, only a few worldwide are capable of building racetracks, and none in the GCC could construct FIA-homologated tracks until we undertook this project. My vision was for UNIMAC to become the sole Middle Eastern contractor capable of building FIA-homologated racetracks from A to Z, including the highly delicate tarmac scope.

How is the company capitalizing on the ongoing development of new airports in Saudi Arabia?

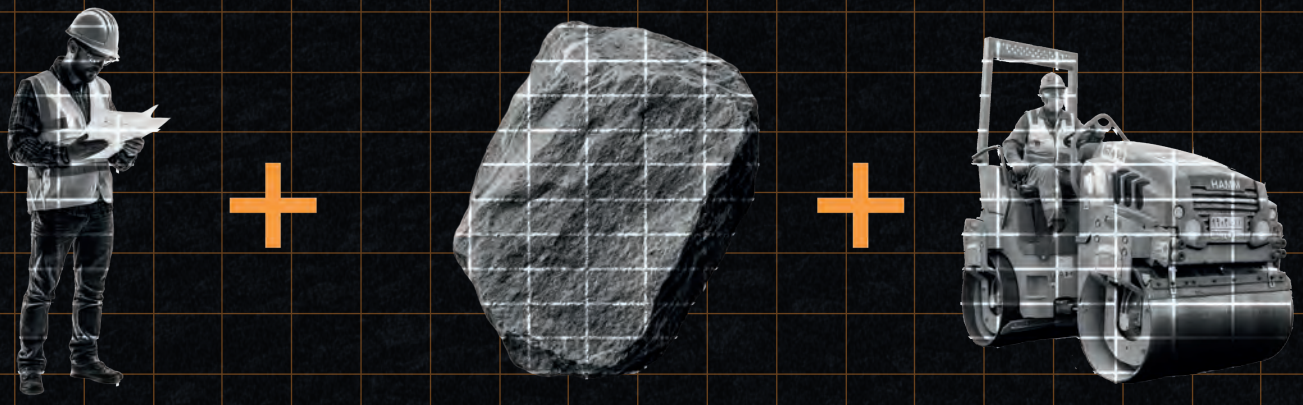
UNIMAC specializes in airfield construction, focusing specifically on runways and taxiways rather than airport building facilities. Over the decades, we have achieved significant milestones, distinguishing our expertise particularly in challenging projects that demand higher and stricter standards. Airports in Saudi Arabia have encountered persistent issues with runway grip, impacting their operational efficiency. To address this, the goal is now to construct runways with enhanced grip, promoting quicker operations. This is especially relevant with an airport that plans on accommodating 120 million passengers a year by 2030, in addition to millions of tons of cargo. At UNIMAC, our materials department and labs play a crucial role as we handle all our designs in-house, and every asphalt mix used across Saudi runways is developed by our team. We invest significantly in advanced equipment to ensure the highest quality outcomes. ✖

BIO

Fadi Aristo Hatoum is a highly accomplished business executive and leader, currently serving as the CEO and partner of UNIMAC, a heavy civil construction specializing in infrastructure. Born in Riyadh, he successfully completed a bachelor's degree in business administration from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, followed by a master's degree in finance from London. He further pursued an MS in Information Systems and an MBA from Boston University. Hatoum has built an impressive career through his unwavering dedication and expertise in the industry for over 25 years.

BUILDING TOMORROW, ONE ROAD AT A TIME

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND EMPOWERING PROGRESS.



UNIMAC

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United Maintenance and Contracting Company (UNIMAC), founded in 1979, has grown from a modest operation to a first-class infrastructure powerhouse in Saudi Arabia. With over a thousand employees and a fleet of 800+ plants and equipment, UNIMAC has become a cornerstone in the Kingdom's rapidly developing infrastructure landscape. The company's expertise spans a wide range of sectors, including road construction, airport infrastructure, major highways, and even professional race circuits.

UNIMAC's growth has led to its expansion into a holding company with three distinct entities: UNIMAC Construction, UNIMINE, and UNISCAPE. This structure allows UNIMAC to offer comprehensive solutions, from heavy civil infrastructure and road construction to mining high-quality aggregates and asphalt production, and even landscaping services. The company's divisions cover everything from asphalt production and MEP activities to substructure works and irrigation systems. With a strong focus on environmental responsibility, quality control, and innovation, UNIMAC not only builds infrastructure but also contributes to the sustainable development of Saudi Arabia, maximizing return on investment for clients through the construction of high-quality, long-lasting roads and infrastructures.



HIGH *impact*

STAMiNA has emerged as the go-to agency in Saudi Arabia for executing complex event productions in unusual circumstances and navigating challenging situations with precision and impact.

Samer Issa-El-Khoury
CO-FOUNDER,
STAMINA

What are the latest achievements and major highlights for STAMiNA?
STAMiNA, incubated in Saudi Arabia in 2018, pioneered the launch of large-scale international events in the Kingdom. What began as a small office in Diriyah with just three employees has scaled into a powerhouse of more than 150 professionals by 2025, structured across six departments and specialized units. With the launch of Extreme H in 2025, the world's first hydrogen off-road racing championship powered entirely by Hydrogen fuel cell technology, STAMiNA secured the contract to deliver the inaugural race in Qiddiya. We built a custom off-road track on the iconic "Edge of the World" cliff in just 30 days, a feat that speaks to our executional velocity. At the same time, we are proud of winning the Saudi Sustainability Award for the E1 Race that we delivered in Jeddah in 2024. For us, sustainability is the DNA of our operations. Every project we deliver is measured against that principle.

To what extent has Vision 2030 created momentum and business opportunities for your company?
Vision 2030 is not just a national strategy but a business accelerator. STAMiNA is perfectly synced with it. We pivot faster than the market shifts, we absorb policy updates before they are inked, and we move in lockstep with the Kingdom's transformation. That is why we are not just participants in this ecosystem but architects of it in our industry

How do you maintain operational excellence across such diverse formats and locations?
Our formula is simple: value over margins, impact over profit. Every project we deliver is designed to elevate Saudi Arabia on the global stage. This mindset ensures flawless execution, whether it is Formula E, the Camel Endurance Cup, or beyond. Saudi is now the benchmark for world-class production, which is why global players want to stage their projects here. Saudi Arabia is the world's new epicenter of entertainment. That trajectory only accelerates as we march toward Expo 2030 and the FIFA World Cup 2034. we are already engineering the playbook that gets us there.

What role does STAMiNA play in bridging international event organizers with the Saudi market?

"Our formula is simple: value over margins, impact over profit."

STAMiNA acts as a cultural translator and strategic partner. We are the gateway between global vision and Saudi ambition. We embed global brands into Saudi Arabia's unique context while showcasing the Kingdom's values to the world. International partners entrust us with their brands, reputations, and futures in this region. For seven years, from Formula E to Extreme E, we have delivered proof that Saudi Arabia is not a market to test but conquer.

How does STAMiNA balance its commitment to local execution with international expansion?
We run a centralized command out of Riyadh to maintain consistency and control while scaling internationally without diluting quality. Our teams have been seconded to Formula E in Jakarta, Portland, London, Marrakesh, and Berlin to help execute those Races abroad. Looking ahead, Africa is the next frontier. The next decade will present extraordinary opportunities there, and STAMiNA will be ready.

How do you address the need for a specialized workforce and local upskilling in your operations?
We built the STAMiNA Talent Hub, a pipeline that combines international expertise with local growth and flawless execution. Our people stay with us because we invest in them, challenge them, and give them ownership. That is why we can deliver multiple mega-events simultaneously, like last season when we executed the Red Sea Film Festival, the E1 Boat Championship, the AlUla Tour cycling race, and Formula E, all at once, across four cities.

What are your strategic priorities for the short term?
Our north star is loyalty to our partners. We will deepen existing alliances, co-create the future, strategically expand through new IPs that we will soon unveil and to stay first, as STAMiNA has built its brand on being first, and we will never stop. ✖

BIO

Samer Issa-El-Khoury is a visionary entrepreneur and engineer and Co-Founder of STAMiNA, a leader in the event production industry. Renowned for delivering high-profile projects under intense time constraints, he has consistently turned ambitious concepts into reality, from the Formula E track in Diriyah and the Jeddah Corniche Circuit for Formula One, to Extreme E tracks in Al Ula and NEOM. Currently pursuing a PhD, he combines engineering rigor with strategic business vision to deliver transformative events that set new global benchmarks.



Image: HaniDraye



BIO

Bilal Fares has over 20 years of experience in retail, business, and organizational management. Since 2018, he has been working at adidas, holding various roles, and contributing significantly to the company's growth at a regional and global level. His extensive experience spans leading large teams across various functions and geographies, providing him with a deep understanding of product management, marketing, people development, customer service, technology, and service delivery.

Bilal Fares
SVP & GENERAL MANAGER,
ADIDAS EMC MARKET

In what ways is adidas evolving its identity and business model to position itself as a cultural and lifestyle enabler within the dynamic Saudi market?
Globally, adidas has long been embedded in cultural movements that transcend sports. Saudi Arabia represents a new frontier in this journey, a market that is rapidly evolving in line with Vision 2030 and demanding deeper, more meaningful brand engagement. Unlike other international companies that operate through local distributors, we made a strategic decision to establish a direct presence in the Kingdom. Our brand is now focused on serving as an enabler of localized identity, leveraging global best practices while fostering regional relevance. This strategy has yielded early success through curated events, creative partnerships, and impactful brand activations that resonate with the Saudi consumer. Our mission is to create transformative experiences that emotionally connect consumers with our brand and values. For example, our National Day activations or co-designed collections with Saudi creatives are not focused on driving sales but are about inspiring pride, engagement, and authenticity. When we launched limited-edition items or held experiential events, the impact was measured in cultural capital, not just revenue. That builds trust and loyalty, which is the foundation for long-term commercial success.

How does adidas tailor its marketing, product development, and consumer engagement strategies to appeal to the Kingdom's demographic?
With nearly 75% of the Saudi population under the age of 35, we are addressing a market that is digitally native, culturally aware, and globally connected. To meet these expectations, we have embedded local talent into every layer of our operations. Our teams in Riyadh and Jeddah are predominantly composed of young Saudis, many of whom are women who are stepping into leadership roles and driving key initiatives. These individuals bring critical insights into consumer behavior, fashion trends, and digital consumption patterns. We also recognize the importance of enabling women in the Kingdom. Empowering female athletes and creatives is not just a social responsibility but a business imperative. Our marketing strategies emphasize inclusion, local pride, and co-creation, giving Saudi youth a platform to shape the future of the brand in their own image. ✖



Image: AFZAL KHAN MAHEEN



Abdulrahman K. Jastaniah
DEPUTY MINISTER, STRATEGIC PLANNING & INVESTMENT



Jack Silverstein
CO-FOUNDER, ENFIELD & PARTNERS, CO-OWNER, DC UNITED, BOARD MEMBER, AL-AHLY

LOCAL *capital*

Sustained and careful investment is transforming the Saudi sporting sector into a major economic and social driver, while building a globally competitive, community-centered ecosystem.

How does Vision 2030 relate to sports investment, and how does it shape the sector's development?

ABDULRAHMAN K. JASTANIAH Sports investment is a key enabler and a crucial factor that functions in two parts. First, the Ministry of Sports is tasked with enabling, organizing, regulating, and enhancing the quality of the sports sector and related investments. Second, we focus on achieving the targets of the national strategy for sports, which include increasing community engagement and participation, improving the quality of players, strengthening talent management, and boosting local GDP. These two strategic directions are deeply connected with Vision 2030, and we are actively working on several enablers to achieve these goals. A good example would be the development of sports facilities, logistics services provided by the private sector and institutions, live-streaming and media services, investments in digital transformation, and overcoming human capital challenges related to returns from live streaming.

As someone actively investing in the sector, what are the key factors for success in sports investment?

JACK SILVERSTEIN I am passionate about investing in sports because it offers a unique opportunity to be a responsible steward of capital. Sports teams may have only a few shareholders, but they have massive stakeholder communities: fans, supporters, and others who are emotionally and materially invested. Sports investment can have a profound social impact. However, there are many challenges. Not all sports assets are created equally, and different leagues and regions operate under different economic and regulatory models. An investor must ask themselves why am I doing this? Are you driven by societal impact or economic gain? Understanding this is critical. Having a deep grasp of one's motivations and the nuances of the sector is essential before navigating the complexity of investing in sports.

How important is planning for successful sports investments?

AKJ Planning is absolutely fundamental. It is the first step we need to take, alongside a realistic evaluation of our resources. We must achieve our ambition by setting the right priorities and linking them to strategic pathways. A sound strategy is essential for realizing these priorities. It is about maximizing the value of our existing assets, increasing the usage of these assets, and driving higher returns. Planning enables seamless execution across all sectors, public and private, ensuring that every stakeholder moves forward in a coordinated, integrated fashion.

How has your experience been investing in Saudi Arabia's sports sector?

JS It has been a remarkable journey. I was first introduced to the idea of investing in Saudi sports two years ago, and since then, I have worked closely with the Ministry of Sports and Surge Sports Investment, the PIF's sports arm, and joined the board of Al-Ahly FC. As an American, I have had the privilege of observing the transformation from an external perspective. The sports sector here is more than entertainment; it is a tool for improving public health, encouraging wellness, and combating chronic disease. HRH Princess Reema explained this to me, and it completely shifted my perspective. Sports are becoming a part of Saudi Arabia's national identity. With a young, passionate population and growing empowerment of women, the sector is poised for long-term success.

What is the scale of investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia's sports sector?

AKJ The opportunities are immense. We evaluate them based on two key indicators. First, the market value of the sector is predicted to reach SAR80 billion by 2030, up from SAR25 billion today. Second, its contribution to GDP currently stands at 1.25%, and we aim to double that to 2.5% by 2030. In the next five years, investments will come through various channels, including government funding, local and foreign investors, and PIF. Today, the private sector contributes around 15%. Our goal is to increase this to 25%, with the government continuing to play a supportive role.

How would you describe the current investment climate?

JS The ministries of investment and sports have been incredibly supportive, providing strong engagement and creating a welcoming environment for foreign investors. It is still early in the privatization journey, which means we have a rare chance to shape the foundation the right way. From my perspective, this is not about passion or fandom but a calculated business decision. Saudi Arabia is among the world's most promising greenfield opportunities in sports. The sector's openness and government support are encouraging, and I look forward to continued engagement. ✖



The King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh

Image: FELIX DE JUAN

NOT A SPRINT, *a Marathon*

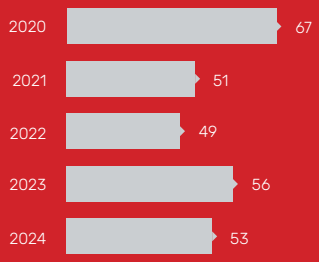
Vision 2030 identifies the sports sector as a multiplier of broad socio-economic benefit.

SPORT, from public participation to team building, event hosting and broadcasting, is a pillar of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. One that continues to internationalize the Saudi brand. Unquestionably the prestige of staging FIFA World Cup 2034 marks the Kingdom's sporting high watermark. FIFA President Gianni Infantino unequivocally declares that, "For those investors who might feel overwhelmed by fast-moving trends in AI and tech, I have one piece of advice: invest in football. It is the most universal, emotionally resonant platform in the world." Speaking at the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh on May 13, 2025, Infantino stressed how, "A single FIFA World Cup delivers 104 matches in one month; that is the equivalent of 104 Super Bowls." Moreover, with around 70% of the global football economy [which] "…today generates an estimated EUR270 billion annually, concentrated in Europe [the] imbalance reveals a significant opportunity." He believes that the Saudi League could rank among the world's, "top six or seven within five to six years."

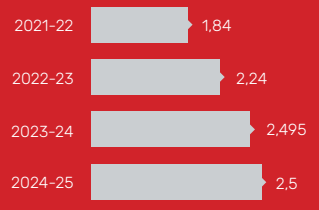
LaLiga President Javier Tebas observes that, "In Spain, La Liga contributes 1.44% to GDP," believing that "Saudi Arabia's goal of 2.5% is ambitious but attainable." The Saudi Pro League (SPL) is immediately known for spending on its household-name players, brought in to build local fanbases and club legacy, and generate global interest. But behind the scenes the prudence of the free market is increasingly in evidence in pursuit of stable returns on investment. The Sports Clubs Investment and Privatization Project begun in June 2023, took the four prominent Saudi clubs of Al-Hilal, Al-Nassr, Al-Ittihad, and Al-Ahli into the private arena, with the PIF retaining a 75% stake. Since 2023, the league is answerable to a new Financial Oversight Committee, rather than the Ministry.

PIF, already the owners of Premier League side Newcastle United Football Club in the UK, with a stake in the McLaren Formula One team, among other interests, in 2024 inked a partnership with the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (Concacaf). The deal spells the Kingdom's participation in both 2025 and 2027 biannual Gold Cups. The events will feature extensive PIF branding at all matches. Further down the value chain, all tournament fixtures will be live-streamed free on international sports streaming platform DAZN.com. Recall that PIF's sports arm, SURJ Sports Investment, purchased a USD1 billion minority stake in DAZN to expand the KSA's penetration of digital sports consumption. In 2025, PIF also became an official partner of FIFA Club World Cup 2025, staged in the US from June 14 to July 13, 2025. ✖

SAUDI NATIONAL TEAM FIFA RANKING



SPL TOTAL ATTENDANCE FIGURES (MILLIONS)



FOOTBALL

Saudi football clubs are driving the Kingdom's sporting evolution by expanding their reach, investing in infrastructure and talent, and building inclusive, multi-sport excellence.



Esteve Calzada
CEO,
AL-HILAL FOOTBALL CLUB

AS THE KINGDOM'S most decorated club, Al-Hilal has succeeded domestically by attracting major sponsors and fan engagement. Our focus now is internationalization. International players and pitch success help, but we must also expand our global product distribution. Broadcasting rights are not only a revenue channel but a critical pathway to growing international audiences and securing international sponsors. In terms of investment, sponsors want visibility and business impact, both of which Al-Hilal provides. We have succeeded domestically because of our sporting success and brand power. Now, we aim to grow globally, which requires more creative activation, especially in digital and social media. Younger audiences consume differently, so we must adapt. There is growing global interest in the Saudi Pro League, not just because of star players but due to the product's overall quality. Visitors often leave impressed. The product is good, and with commercial ambition, we believe this area will grow significantly. In June, we faced Real Madrid in Miami, which was an incredible moment. Playing European giants showcases our competitiveness and promotes Saudi football globally. The Club World Cup was also a momentous opportunity to compete with the world's best, represent Al-Hilal and Saudi Arabia, and grow our international brand. These matches are impactful and resonate with fans and amplify our global reach.



Fernando Hierro
SPORTING DIRECTOR,
AL-NASSR

UNDERSTANDING the Saudi football project is essential. I was among the first foreign players in Qatar, and I see a similar vision here: ambitious, international, and sustainable. The Pro League is now a global platform, attracting stars not only to play but to compete and promote Saudi football. It is a serious project, one that needs time to mature. However, its momentum is undeniable, having begun in 2023 with major financial backing. I am personally impressed by the league's quality and vision. For long term success, training and preparation facilities are essential. Beyond coaching and competition, players need world-class facilities to develop their talent. Saudi Arabia's investments in training grounds, especially ahead of the World Cup, are vital. These facilities help build a professional image and attract global attention. Sponsorships, media, and talent development all hinge on infrastructure. Step by step, Saudi football is building a strong foundation for the future. Furthermore, young football talent is increasingly seeing the Saudi League's value. Through TV broadcasts, sponsorships, and marketing, visibility has increased. The league is a transitional platform now; players may arrive from Brazil or Portugal and eventually move to Europe. Infrastructure, stadiums, and training facilities are improving rapidly. As we prepare for hosting the World Cup, everything is aligning. The project is evolving daily.



Waleed Muath
CEO,
ALULA FOOTBALL CLUB

ONCE a modest regional club with limited exposure and achievements, AlUla Club now stands at the forefront of a new era in Saudi sports. Today, we proudly compete in 29 different sports disciplines, with a strategic goal to become a national benchmark for multi-sport excellence. What truly distinguishes AlUla is not just our ambition in football, but our holistic approach combining elite performance with deep community development and inclusive national representation. In just two years, we have built a competitive edge across sports including basketball, women's football, badminton, and tennis, while our women's football team was promoted to the Premier League, finishing fifth in its debut season, surpassing several legacy clubs. These achievements are a testament to our core values: inclusive strategy, elite recruitment, and grassroots integration. AlUla is shaping a model for sustainable, community-rooted excellence in Saudi sports. We recognize that elite performance and sustainable development require world-class facilities, purpose-built to nurture talent and drive competitive success. We are currently planning the development of a high-performance center in AlUla that will serve as a central hub for football and a range of other disciplines including basketball, futsal, volleyball, tennis, archery, gymnastics, and many more. In parallel, we are designing the AlUla HPC Stadium, a modern venue with a capacity of 5,500 spectators.



Gianni Infantino
PRESIDENT,
FIFA

SAUDI ARABIA is country that is fast becoming a true global hub for football, or soccer, as our friends from the US would say. Saudi Arabia is not only investing in football but embracing the game in all its dimensions. The Kingdom will proudly host the FIFA World Cup in 2034, marking a transformative moment not only for Saudi Arabia but for the entire footballing world.

Football is not just a sport but a global phenomenon. An estimated 5 billion people identify as fans. These individuals differ in nationality, language, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status, but they are united by their passion for the game. That is the unique ability of football: to bring people together across borders and ideologies.

Now, as we gather here at an investment forum, the natural question arises: What are the opportunities for investors in football, especially in Saudi Arabia, as we approach 2030 and beyond?

The football economy today generates an estimated EUR270 billion annually, with approximately 70% of that concentrated in Europe. That imbalance reveals a significant opportunity: if the rest of the world, including Saudi Arabia and the US, can capture just a fraction of what Europe achieves, the growth potential is staggering. Saudi Arabia is already making moves in this direction by investing strategically in domestic clubs, infrastructure, training, and women's football. These efforts are positioning the Kingdom as a global capital for the sport, creating new opportunities for partnerships, sponsorships, merchandising, media rights, and youth development.

Women's football is another transformative opportunity. The FIFA Women's World Cup is growing exponentially, and the 2027 edition will take place in Brazil, followed by North America in 2031. We aim to reach EUR1 billion in revenue from the Women's World Cup, revenue that will be fully reinvested into the women's game. Saudi Arabia is among the few nations to have developed a comprehensive ecosystem for women's football: launching a women's league, a national team, and promoting leadership roles for women in the sport. Football is the only global team sport for women with such a vast and growing audience.

For those investors who might feel overwhelmed by fast-moving trends in AI and tech, I have one piece of advice: invest in football. It is the most universal, emotionally resonant platform in the world. ✖

**Remarks from the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh, May 2025.*



Javier Tebas
PRESIDENT,
LALIGA

What role does financial sustainability play in sports investment?

Financial sustainability is absolutely essential, not just for sports but any sector. Saudi Arabia is currently in the phase of government-led investment, which is necessary to lay the foundation. However, over time, private investment must take over to ensure the sector can sustain itself. In Spain, La Liga contributes 1.44% to GDP. Saudi Arabia's goal of 2.5% is ambitious but attainable. The industry creates jobs, including over 50,000 football players in Europe and millions working in associated businesses. However, we must be careful. Unsustainable spending can destabilize clubs. We must ensure clubs follow financial regulations and operate within their means.

How do you see the Saudi League evolving competitively in the coming years?

I believe with patience and a strategic approach, the Saudi League can become one of the top six or seven in the world within five to six years. The league has already made great strides by bringing in high-level players, investing in infrastructure, and preparing for the 2034 World Cup. However, to truly compete, the league must expand, with more clubs, stadiums, and fans and a stronger media presence. Saudi Arabia has a major advantage, namely its young, digitally connected population. Compared to older societies in Europe, this demographic allows for faster, more direct engagement. You need to strengthen domestic attendance and international outreach. Strategy, action, measurement, and adaptation are key.

What impact does youth engagement and talent development have on competitiveness and investment?

Talent development is essential. Historically, players have always moved across countries, which improves skill levels and club performance. Spain relies heavily on local talent developed through academies, which creates club identity and boosts competitiveness. Having top talent also attracts investors. Investment funds are increasingly targeting the sports sector worldwide. Now, even in American football, funds are allowed to hold shares. Saudi Arabia is following this global trend, and its steps toward Vision 2030 are well-aligned. ✖

BIO

Javier Tebas has been the President of Liga Nacional de Fútbol Profesional (LaLiga) since April 2013. With a law degree from the University of Zaragoza and a career in corporate, sports and insolvency law, Tebas built a legal-practice foundation before transitioning into football administration. Under his leadership at LaLiga, his focus has been on enhancing financial discipline among clubs, centralising the sale of broadcast rights and driving the league's international expansion.

ADULTS (18+) PRACTICING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (150MIN/WEEK)

SOURCE: VISION 2030

Baseline (2022)	49%
Actual Value	58.5%
Target Value	53%
Achievement Rate	110.75%

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (5–17 YEARS) PRACTICING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (60 MIN/DAY)

SOURCE: VISION 2030

Baseline (2022)	6%
Actual Value	18.7%
Target Value	10%
Achievement Rate	187%

NUMBER OF HOBBY CLUBS

SOURCE: VISION 2030

Baseline (2018)	0
Actual Value	1.832
Target Value	1.68
Achievement Rate	109.5%



Image: nadinegy

WELLNESS: The New Wealth

THE LONGEVITY *economy*

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is redefining prosperity by placing health, wellbeing, and longevity at the heart of its economic transformation. The Kingdom no longer views wellness as a social cost but as a strategic growth sector and one that can unlock productivity, attract investment, and drive innovation across healthcare, lifestyle, and technology.

The urgency is clear. Chronic diseases linked to lifestyle and aging weigh heavily on national budgets. As Dr. Mehmood Khan, CEO of Hevolution Foundation, notes, "compressing the period of unhealthy aging by just 12 months could unlock trillions in global GDP growth." This insight is fueling a national pivot from reactive treatment to proactive health-span management, opening vast opportunities for investors in preventive care, biotech, and health-tech.

Public health reform is at the core of this transition. Saleh Abdullah Al-Tamimi, CEO of Riyadh First Health Cluster, underscores the Kingdom's commitment to raising life expectancy to 80 years by 2030. His cluster's investment in primary care, large-scale screening, and AI-enabled telemedicine reflects a strategic shift from hospital-based treatment to preventive and community-driven care, making the system both more efficient and more investable.

In parallel, the private sector is shaping a consumer-driven wellness economy. Mohammed Nabil Hefni, CEO of CORE Life, champions a holistic "mind–body–soul" approach, positioning wellness as essential rather than aspirational. With offerings that span fitness, nutrition, recovery, and social connection, CORE Life exemplifies how integrated wellness solutions can meet the rising demand of an increasingly health-conscious population. Players like Leejam Sports, Soliman Fakeeh Hospital, SMC Hospitals, and Nahdi Medical are similarly leveraging technology and partnerships to bridge healthcare, retail, and preventive services, expanding access and redefining customer experience.

Crucially, the pharmaceutical sector is stepping up to support this ecosystem. SPIMACO, a leading Saudi pharmaceutical manufacturer, is advancing localized production and innovation in preventive medicine and longevity-related therapeutics, reinforcing the Kingdom's ambition to become a regional hub for life sciences and health innovation.

Saudi Arabia's role as a pioneer in longevity science amplifies this momentum. Hevolution Foundation has invested over USD300 million in just 18 months into geroscience research and biotech ventures, positioning the country as a hub for next-generation solutions to extend healthy life.

This convergence of policy commitment, public-private collaboration, pharmaceutical innovation, and scientific investment is creating a robust, investable ecosystem. Opportunities span from digital health platforms and corporate wellness to longevity-driven therapeutics and specialized wellness hospitality. ✖



FROM LIFESPAN *to healthspan*

Hevolution's vision is to lead the charge in transforming how aging is perceived and addressed globally, focusing on not only extending lifespans, but also ensuring that those long lives are meaningful.

Mehmood Khan
CEO,
HEVOLUTION FOUNDATION

Can you provide an overview of the Hevolution Foundation?
The Hevolution Foundation is approaching its fourth year of existence. Essentially, our core mission revolves around catalyzing the shift from lifespan to health span, i.e.: the number of years you live in good health. Our focus is on prolonging life and on ensuring a healthy and functional lifespan. Central to our vision is extending the maximum human health span, ensuring it benefits everyone, not just a select few.

What strategies and initiatives is Hevolution employing to cultivate partnerships?
Our ecosystem revolves around fostering collaboration across various stakeholders. We actively seek public input to ensure transparency and alignment with societal values. Furthermore, engaging policymakers is essential for scaling our impact nationally and mobilizing resources effectively. We also integrate legal and ethical considerations into our decision-making processes, emphasizing the importance of responsible innovation. Collaborating with academia and the private sector enables us to drive scientific advancements from conception to commercialization, ensuring tangible benefits reach the masses.

Could you share some insights into the significance of Hevolution's investments in the field of geroscience?
Despite being relatively new to the scene, Hevolution has committed approximately USD300 million over the last 18 months, making us the largest philanthropic funder and second-largest funder of geroscience globally, after the US government. This financial backing has enabled us to support over 160 grantees worldwide and forge partnerships with esteemed institutions such as the Buck Institute, Northwestern University, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Our inaugural Global Healthspan Summit, which attracted over 2,000 attendees worldwide, exemplifies our commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration across the entire value chain.

Could you outline the strategic approach to educating the public about Hevolution's mission?
We are committed to ensuring clarity in our messaging and differentiating between healthspan and longevity. We want people to understand the importance of remaining functionally independent as they age, rather than merely extending their lifespan. To achieve this, we have adopted a multi-pronged approach. First, we prioritize consistency in our narrative, ensuring that everyone—from policymakers to the average person—understands our mission. Second, we emphasize credible science over pseudoscience, partnering with reputable institutions and experts to validate our approach. Finally, we leverage a multi-media, channel approach, including earned media, paid media, social media, our website, and high-value speaking venues to inform and engage with the public and facilitate meaningful conversations about healthy aging. By investing in scientific research, funding top-tier institutions, and attracting seasoned leaders to our team, we have earned the trust and respect of the scientific community and private sector alike. Our partnerships with esteemed organizations such as Harvard, and the National Academy of Medicine speak to our commitment to collaboration and excellence. Moreover, the caliber of talent we have been able to recruit reflects the strength and vision of our organization.

What is Hevolution's vision for the future and its role in driving positive change?
In the short term, Hevolution aims to expand its portfolio of ventures, with plans to end 2024 with eight to 10 early-stage biotech companies under its umbrella, building upon the success of Aeovian Pharmaceuticals, our inaugural venture. Additionally, we are focused on operationalizing translational science initiatives to validate diagnostics and therapeutics, bridging the gap between scientific discovery and clinical practice. Our ultimate goal remains to revolutionize healthspan extension, ensuring it is accessible to all individuals, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. By mobilizing both public and private sectors, we aim to catalyze a paradigm shift toward prioritizing healthy aging and preventative healthcare. Our success will be measured not by our financial investments alone, but by our ability to galvanize a global movement toward promoting healthy longevity for all individuals. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to age gracefully and enjoy a high quality of life well into their later years. ✖

BIO

Mehmood Khan has been CEO of Hevolution Foundation since 2020. He was previously CEO of Life Biosciences Inc and, before that, served as vice chairman and chief scientific officer, global R&D, at PepsiCo Inc. Prior to that, he held the position of president, global R&D center at Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited. He was a faculty member at the Mayo Clinic and Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minnesota, serving as consultant endocrinologist and director of the diabetes, endocrine, and nutritional trials unit in the endocrinology division. Khan has a medical degree from the University of Liverpool, is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London, and of the American College of Endocrinology, an elected fellow in the department of pharmacology at University of Oxford and holds two honorary PhDs in humanities and international law.

THE MEANING *of Life*

The National Vision 2030 sets the groundwork to secure the nation's long-term presence in leading-edge medical exploration.

LAUNCHED IN 2016, Vision 2030 is the roadmap for Saudi Arabia's wholesale socio-economic transformation in readiness for the smart world of AI, Web3, and Industry 4.0. Saudization, the objective of building a skilled local workforce, is in turn contingent upon our greatest asset, good health. It follows then, that the notion of wellness encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being is percolating into the workplace. Diversification away from hydrocarbons, therefore, also marks a shift away from the sedentary life, an unfortunate hallmark of an economy awash with oil revenue. In stark contrast, futuristic cities such as NEOM, the smart domain of the healthy, educated and globally competitive citizen, are even foreseen implementing a digital twin of each citizen to monitor health from birth to quality old age.

As Dani Afiouni, the Founder & CEO of Longevity Wellness Hub explains to TBY, "The wellness economy in the Middle East is valued at approximately USD8 billion and is expected to reach USD17 billion within five years [and] education is the key to unlocking this market." Saudi Arabia's informational efforts broadly encourage the citizen to substitute prevention for treatment. The indications are encouraging, as according to the Saudi Sports for All Federation (SFA) the physically active population soared from 13% in 2018 to around 60% in 2025. In parallel, the state is redirecting the general public towards primary care. Saleh Abdullah Al-Tamimi, the CEO of the Riyadh First Health Cluster of the Ministry of Health explains how, "Historically, Saudi patients have bypassed GPs, going directly to specialists and hospitals [a tendency that] has overloaded our secondary and tertiary care facilities and contributed to inefficiencies." He adds that, "We have increased the number of board certified family physicians working in primary care centers from 30 in 2018 to 250, aiming for 450 by 2030." The plan appears successful as, "Total visits to primary care centers increased from 850,000 in 2018 to 3.5 million in 2024."

Vision 2030 is transforming the nation into a regional and global biotech hub replete with biomanufacturing facilities and the R&D capacities to pursue major, and in one case, underexplored corners of advanced medicine. The National Biotechnology Strategy has seen a dedicated spend of USD3.9 billion in biotech R&D since 2021. By focusing on a high-growth medical field of public benefit and economic potential, the Strategy prioritizes Saudi Arabia's self-sufficiency in vaccines, biomanufacturing and genomics (to curb dependence on foreign precision medicine). The biotech field is foreseen creating 11,000 highly skilled jobs by 2030, and generating 3% of non-oil GDP, around USD34 billion, by that date.

The Kingdom's medical researchers, addressing this very question, argue that quality longevity is medically possible. Vision 2030, targeting a healthy life expectancy of 80 by 2030, has identified longevity as an underfunded and underexplore area of biotech research. Globally, there is a rising prevalence of people living beyond 60. By 2030, 1 in 6 people will be 60 or older, numbering 1.4 billion, and scaling 2.1 billion by 2050. Saudi Arabia, too, has an ageing population, and its dedicated researchers intend to narrow the gap between actual biological age and the ideal biological age of peak physical health.

In 2018, Saudi Crown Prince HH Mohammed bin Salman introduced the Hevolution Foundation, a global front-runner in longevity research with an annual budget of up to USD1 billion. It remains the world's second-largest funder of geroscience. Other links in the longevity chain include King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), a prestigious academic and research institution, the self-explanatory Research Development and Innovation Authority, the Saudi longevity society (SLA), established under the Ministry of Health that promotes the healthspan and well-being commitment of Vision 2030, and King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST). The latter partners prominent research institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the Technology Leaders Program to build the local skills-base.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has inked the playbook for improved healthspan, building a dynamic medical industry invested in longevity. ✖



LIFELONG *commitment*

CORE Life is at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's journey toward a healthier, more vibrant future with wellness as an essential part of long-term strategy.

Mohammed Nabil Hefni
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CORE LIFE

How does CORE Life's wellness concept align with Saudi Vision 2030's goals to enhance quality of life?
CORE Life is the first homegrown Saudi lifestyle concept, inspired by the Kingdom's heritage, values, and bold national vision. CORE Life was founded with a vision deeply rooted in our shared commitment to wellness and longevity, and we envisioned as a platform to elevate how people live, move, eat, rest, and connect. Our "mind, body, soul" philosophy encompasses all dimensions of well-being: from preventive health care, physical activity, and mental balance to nutrition, recovery, and meaningful community experiences. Through our destinations, services, and programs, we are cultivating a lifestyle where wellness and longevity are not short-term pursuits, but lifelong commitments. Guided by our CORE ethos, we place vitality, purpose, and human connection at the center of everything we do, empowering individuals and communities to thrive physically, emotionally, and socially in support of the Kingdom's long-term wellbeing goals.

How does CORE partner with government or healthcare stakeholders to combat obesity and diabetes through preventive wellness?
Obesity and diabetes remain some of the Kingdom's most pressing public health concerns. CORE is committed to shifting the national dialogue from reactive treatment to proactive prevention. We are actively collaborating with government stakeholders and healthcare institutions to position wellness as an essential part of long-term health strategy. Our initiatives include corporate wellness programs, metabolic education, tailored access for key demographics, and community engagement. Through comprehensive wellness assessments and personalized lifestyle planning, we are helping individuals make informed, sustainable changes that align with national health goals.

CORE boasts world-class equipment, private gyms, and elite trainers. How do you balance high-end luxury with scalable operations?
To us, luxury is defined by intention, thoughtful design, meaningful experiences, and elevated service. We scale this through innovation and efficiency. Tech-enabled personalization, centralized training, and standardized systems ensure consistency across our properties while preserving the high-touch experience our members expect. We also design modular, flexible spaces that adapt to evolving needs. This approach allows us to grow efficiently while maintaining the quality and integrity that define CORE.

What role do community initiatives play in fostering social wellness and brand positioning?
Events like FIBO Meets Riyadh are key to our vision. As the first international wellness exhibition in Saudi Arabia, it positioned CORE as a national leader in wellness innovation and thought leadership. But beyond visibility, these initiatives build real community. They create platforms for connection, learning, and shared progress. Social wellness is a vital pillar of our philosophy, and by hosting inclusive, educational, and inspiring events, we transform wellness from a personal pursuit into a collective cultural shift.

CORE is part of a broader vertical model encompassing wellness, F&B, residences, adventure, and more. How are these integrated strategically?
CORE is a holistic lifestyle brand, not just a fitness club. Our verticals of wellness, F&B, hospitality and residences, and adventures and excursions are strategically designed to support how people live, eat, move, and heal. Our F&B offerings emphasize clean, performance-driven nutrition. Our destinations are designed around wellness architecture. Our adventure programs reconnect people with movement and nature. Currently, wellness hospitality and F&B present the highest growth opportunities, driven by demand for comprehensive, results-oriented experiences. The real value lies in synergy, how all verticals integrate to offer a seamless lifestyle ecosystem.

How does the Saudi market serve as a launchpad for CORE's international ambitions?
Saudi Arabia is the perfect springboard for our global vision. With its ambitious youth, transformative leadership, and growing appetite for innovation, the Kingdom is setting new standards for wellness. Operating here allows us to refine and elevate our model in a market that is not only fast-growing but also culturally aligned. The success we build locally equips us to expand across the GCC and into global cities where the demand for lifestyle-driven wellness is accelerating. More than a home base, Saudi Arabia is a launchpad for global influence. ✖

BIO

Mohammed N. Hefni holds a bachelor of architecture and an Executive MBA in business administration and management. With over 20 years of experience across real estate development, financial management, hospitality, healthcare, fitness, and wellness, he has worked with leading corporations and holding companies in Saudi Arabia. He currently serves on the boards of several prominent organizations, including KAEC, Dallah Healthcare, Nesma United Industries, KUN Sports, CORE Life, Leylaty, and Defaf Logistics. His diverse expertise makes him a key leader in business development, strategy, and operational excellence.

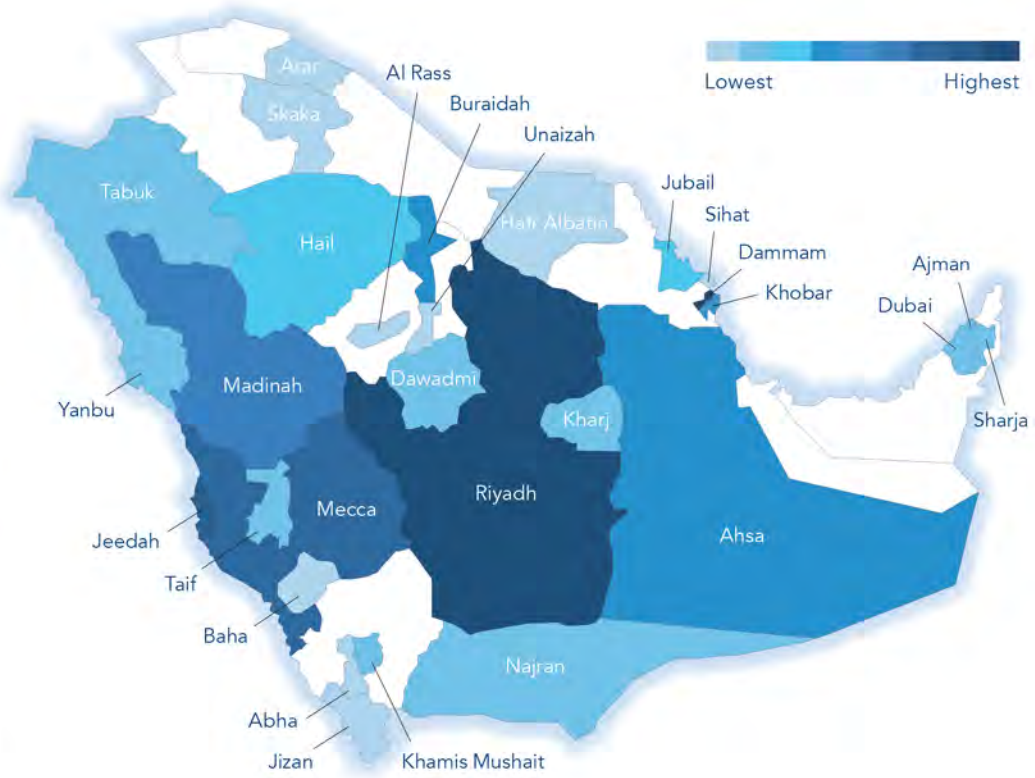


A RHYTHM. A RITUAL. A WAY OF LIVING.

Welcome to CORE LIFE.

VISIT WWW.CORELIFE.FIT OR CALL +966 9200 01223

ليجام
LEEJAM



TOTAL

234

Centers & Studios

222	12
KSA	UAE

532K Total Members	**411K** Male Members	**121K** Female Members	**+90K** Scheduled Classes
+280K Conducted PT sessions	**+750K** GX Attendance	**86** Refurbished Center	**+11M** Total Visits

LEEJAM CURRENTLY OPERATES THE FOLLOWING BRANDS

وقت اللياقة FITNESSTIME PLUS
وقت اللياقة FITNESSTIME
فيزيوثيرابيا العلاج الطبيعي و التأهيل المتقدم
BOX12
SPORT
3days PERSONAL TRAINING
Padelx A FITNESSTIME PARTNER
BLU swimming academy
THUNDER DOME A FITNESSTIME CONCEPT
وقت اللياقة FITNESSTIME XPRESS



SPORTING *chance*

Leejam's first gym opened in 2005. Today, with over 200 centers and 500,000 members, Leejam is the largest network of sports facilities in the MENA region.

Abdulelah bin Mohammed Al-Nemr
CEO,
LEEJAM SPORTS COMPANY

How do you assess the role of the company in shaping Saudi Arabia's sports ecosystem and contributing to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 targets?

Saudi Vision 2030 will enable significant growth for the private sector, given the numerous opportunities it will present in the sports sector. Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, is keen to advance and develop the sports sector in the Kingdom, which makes us in the private sector optimistic about a bright future. Vision 2030's ambitious targets aim to provide the private sector with the opportunity to contribute to achieving many of the sports objectives. At Leejam, we are proud of our partnership with numerous government agencies that have provided us with an attractive investment environment.

How do you balance rapid expansion with operational excellence across your facilities?

At Leejam, we are committed to customer satisfaction and expanding our presence better to serve our customers across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we have worked to increase the number of branches in recent years and this year across regions, while taking into account a set of considerations that ensure the necessary operational efficiency, the safety of our members, their satisfaction level, and the quality of services provided within our branches. A new women-only Fitness Time centers was opened recently, reflecting growing demand for tailored wellness solutions. We are close to our clients, and with over 20 years of experience in the sports gym sector, we are fully aware of the different requirements of female members. We continuously work to have them in our clubs. Additionally, we recognize the importance of digital transformation. Therefore, in the first quarter of 2025, we launched a new application with multiple features and the ability to add many future services. Naturally, the opportunities in the wellness field are diverse, varied, and promising, and Leejam is working closely with the government to develop various ideas that will be announced in the future.

How do you view the company's attractiveness to investors, and what steps are you taking to sustain shareholder value in the coming years?

We view Leejam as increasingly attractive to investors given our market leadership, scaled across more than 200 centers with over 500,000 members, our resilient subscription-based revenues, strong free cash flow generation, and a clear track record of returning capital through dividends and opportunistic share buybacks. Continued interest and upgrades from the market reflect confidence in our fundamentals and runway for disciplined growth.

What sustainability initiatives has Leejam implemented to align with Saudi Arabia's green and health-focused agenda?

We are building smarter, greener facilities using innovative energy systems, water-saving technologies, and eco-friendly materials so that even as our network expands, our carbon and water footprint per member continues to fall. At the same time, we are ensuring inclusivity, with over 50 of our clubs now fully accessible to people with disabilities, and programs like POWER UP and Kick-Start breaking down barriers for youth and women to contribute to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and the Saudi Green Initiative. ✖

BIO

Abdulelah bin Mohammed Al-Nemr has over 21 years of professional experience and has filled several positions across boards and executive committees, as well as at C-level leadership within organizations. Along with CEO of Leejam, Al-Nemr serves as deputy governor for funds planning, development, and supervision at the National Development Fund. Prior to that, he served as COO at The Saudi Technology Development and Investment Company (TAQNIA) a wholly owned subsidiary of the Saudi Public Investment Fund. He has also worked at Riyad Capital and the Saudi Industrial Development Fund. Al-Nemr has completed numerous training programs from reputable business schools including London Business School, the Wharton Business School, and IMD. He obtained his bachelor's degree in finance and economics with distinction from King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals.



QUANTUM *healthcare*

After success in Dubai, The Longevity Wellness Hub is expanding into Saudi Arabia, offering advanced wellness with an aim to provide personalized health insights and promote a holistic approach to well-being.

Dani Afiouni
FOUNDER & CEO,
LONGEVITY WELLNESS HUB

How does your concept go beyond traditional wellness models, and what differentiates your approach?
Elevating the human experience lies in achieving holistic health, a peaceful mind in a strong body. We are redefining a culture of wellbeing by integrating technology and ancient wisdom in a way that is entirely unprecedented. Our approach is rooted in a fundamental understanding of the human experience and the interplay between performance, recovery, and analytics. Unlike conventional wellness centers that operate in silos, our methodology is holistic, merging advanced data on biometrics and energetic pathways with personalized protocols. The foundation of this approach is quantum analytics, a revolutionary method that utilizes frequency devices embedded with Tesla coils to conduct non-invasive full-body scans. These scans analyze the human quantum field through skin, hair, and voice frequencies to map deficiencies and imbalances in organs, hormones, nutrients, toxins, heavy metals, bacteria, and food. This AI-driven system cross-references insights to generate actionable health protocols and recommendations, tailored IV infusions, and nutritional strategies. By eliminating guesswork, we empower individuals with a data-driven pathway to sustainable vitality and with that we are able to enable people with daily protocols to coach them on how to train efficiently, supplement accurately and eat smartly.

What is the commercial strategy behind this venture, and how do you plan to position yourself within the Saudi market?
Saudi Arabia presents an immense opportunity due to the rapid transformation of its economy and the shifting priorities of its population. The wellness economy in the Middle East is valued at approximately USD8 billion and is expected to reach USD17 billion within five years. Education is the key to unlocking this market. In Dubai, we pioneered this industry at a time when holistic wellness centers were virtually non-existent outside California. By implementing the same depth of knowledge in Saudi Arabia while tailoring our messaging and partnerships to local nuances, we aim to establish ourselves as the definitive wellness authority in the region.

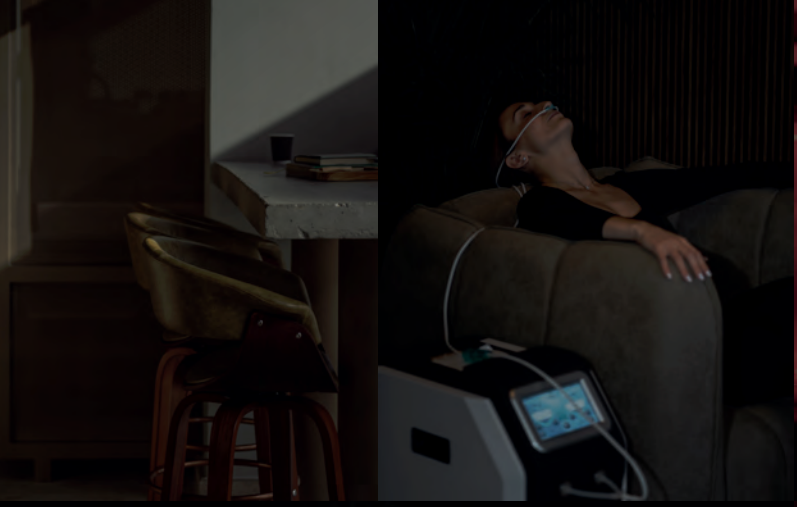
How will you measure success, and what KPIs will define your early milestones?
Success for us is not just measured by financial performance, but by the tangible impact we create in optimizing human potential. Within the first three months, our primary goal is to achieve full capacity across our daily schedule, ensuring that every class and consultation is fully booked. We aim to complete between 5,500 and 6,500 sessions within this period, using real-time data analytics to assess efficacy; however, our ultimate KPI is client outcomes. In Dubai, we executed over 40,000 sessions with a 100% satisfaction rate. Scaling that success in Riyadh is our top priority.

How do you see the future of wellness and longevity evolving in the Kingdom?
Saudi Arabia is at a pivotal moment where wellness is becoming a national priority. While the economy is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, awareness around quality living is still catching up. This is precisely where we see our role: bridging the gap between economic progress and personal wellbeing. The government's investments in healthcare, sustainability, and lifestyle enhancement align seamlessly with our mission. As the market matures, demand for data-driven, personalized wellness solutions will skyrocket. We anticipate that Saudi Arabia will not only embrace this movement, but will set global benchmarks for longevity and optimal living.

What is the fundamental philosophy that drives this initiative?
We are not merely creating a wellness center; we are pioneering a movement that redefines the way people experience health, longevity, and performance. The future of wellness is personalized, data-driven, and highly accessible. We are at the forefront of this transformation, ensuring that the science of longevity is not just for the elite, but for anyone committed to elevating their quality of life. ✖

BIO

Dani Afiouni is a skydiver, endurance athlete, expedition climber, arctic explorer and founder of Longevity Hub. Afiouni has deep personal experience of the value and power of recovery and Quantum Wellness Tech, having climbed 20+ summits, including six of the top seven, and run seven marathons on seven continents in 10 days: the North Pole Marathon, the Everest Marathon, Antarctica, and the Amazon Jungle Ultra 250km. Following an 18-year tenure in fortune 500 Multinational Corporations, Namely PepsiCo and Omnicom, Dani founded Longevity Hub as a lifetime project of passion after having experienced a genuine personal journey of biohacking methods and tech for more than 15 years.






Age well & Live better

Bridging the gap between advanced technology and ancient wisdom

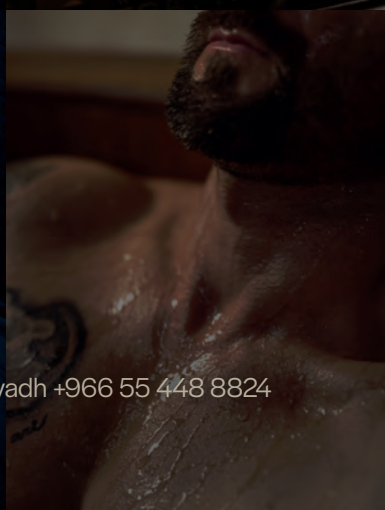



Longevity Wellness Hub is a pioneering destination for advanced human optimization and holistic wellbeing. With a science-backed and precision-driven approach, the hub integrates state-of-the-art therapies - ranging from red light and infrared treatments to hyperbaric oxygen chambers, quantum full-body analysis, Lagree fitness, and contrast therapy—within a luxury, high-performance environment. More than a wellness center, Longevity serves as a community where innovation, recovery, and transformation converge, empowering individuals to age well, live better, and unlock their full potential.









LONGEVITY HUB

www.longevity-hub.io info@longevity-sports.com Dubai +971 54 565 6021 Riyadh +966 55 448 8824

AURORA SPA
اورورا سبا®

Embrace Nature

Aurora Spa for Men is a sanctuary of wellness where nature and luxury meet. Inspired by the serene beauty of Bali, the spa's design evokes a sense of tropical escape, natural textures, calming elements, and soothing aesthetics that transport you the moment you arrive.

More than a wellness center, Aurora Spa is your personal haven to retreat, unwind, and rediscover balance through experiences that blend comfort, luxury, and relief.

From the invigorating Moroccan bath and stress-relieving massages to grooming essentials like pedicures and facials, every service is tailored to combine comfort and complete relief.













Anas Ibn Malik Rd, An Narjis, Riyadh 13323, Saudi Arabia

auroraspa.sa auroraspa auroraspa.sa



IMMERSIVE *wellness*

Aurora Spa & Wellness is a male-only luxury spa in Riyadh where men can relax, recharge, and rejuvenate.

Majed Almanea
FOUNDER AND CEO,
AURORA SPA & WELLNESS

What was the inspiration behind the brand, and how would you describe its core vision and identity?
The inspiration for Aurora Spa came from a desire to redefine what luxury wellness means for men in Saudi Arabia. We saw that most spas focused purely on treatments, missing the opportunity to create something immersive and emotionally resonant. Aurora was built around the idea of offering more than just a service, but a complete sensory experience rooted in nature, design, and thoughtful hospitality. Our vision is to create a sanctuary where men can disconnect, recharge, and experience wellness as a lifestyle, not just a routine. We have built our brand philosophy around engaging all five senses. From visual ambiance and aromatic therapy to curated audio environments and gourmet beverages, every detail is crafted to evoke a sense of renewal. The final and most important sensory element, of course, is touch-delivered through highly trained therapists and personalized treatment protocols. The customer journey is more than just a session; it is an immersive passage. From the moment a client walks through the entrance, they are taken on a sensory expedition that includes saunas, jacuzzis, and ambient lounges, all of which support and elevate the core treatment they have come for.

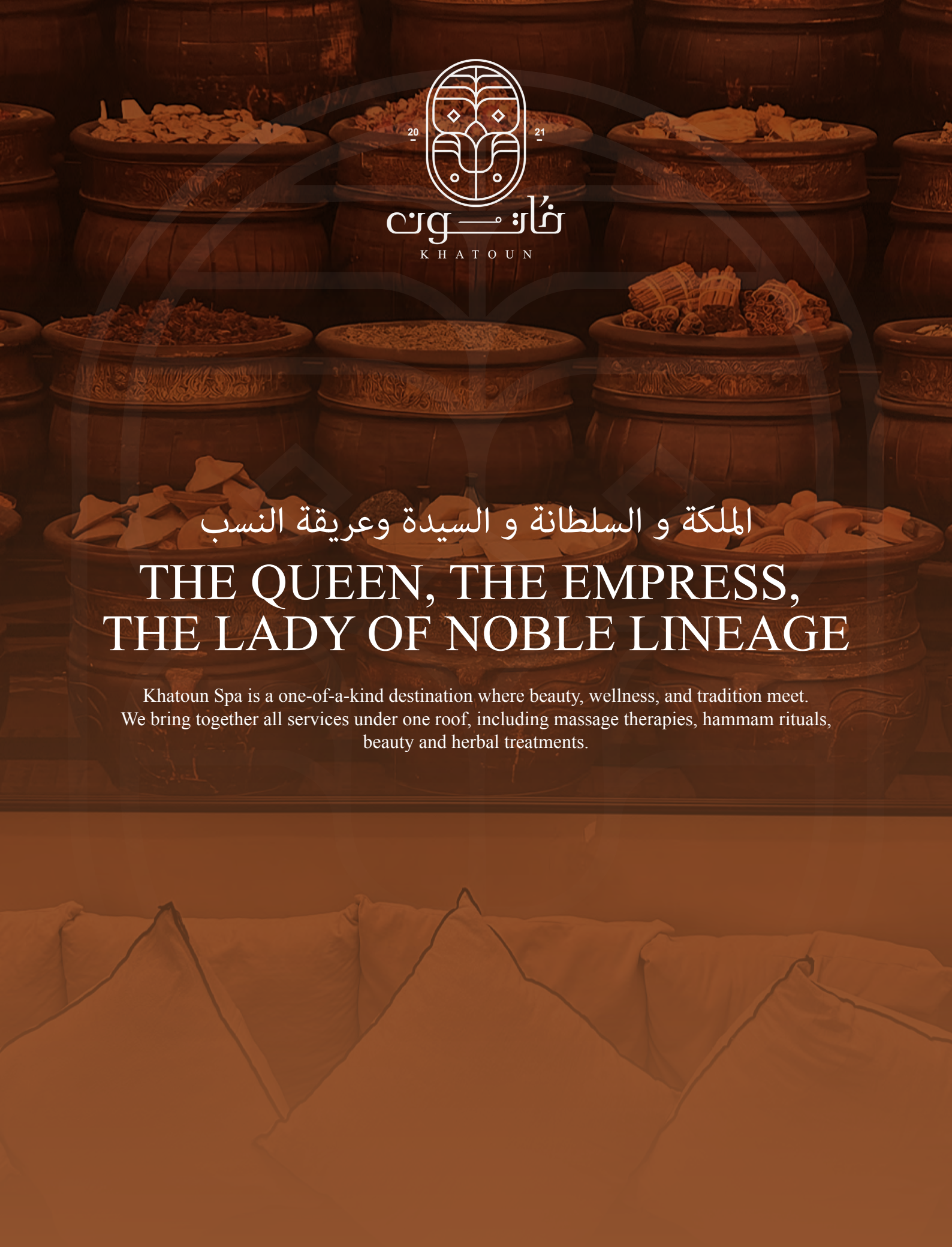
What are the most sought-after services, and have you noticed seasonal trends in customer demand?
Massage remains the most in-demand service year-round; however, we do see fluctuations based on seasonal behavior. During Ramadan and the lead-up to Eid, for example, our Moroccan hammam, facial, and grooming services see a significant spike in demand. In winter months, hot stone massages become especially popular, as clients look for warmth and deeper relaxation. We continuously adapt our offerings to match these seasonal patterns, ensuring clients always receive the most relevant and beneficial treatments.

How would you assess the premium male wellness sector in Saudi Arabia today?
The market has evolved, but it still holds immense potential. When we launched in 2022, there were few premium male wellness providers. Since then, we have seen several new entrants attempt to replicate our model, which is a validation of our strategy. But true differentiation comes down to execution. While competition has increased, so has demand. Saudi consumers are more wellness-conscious than ever. Our biggest differentiator is our obsessive focus on the complete experience. We don't just deliver a massage; we curate a journey. From the moment a customer steps through the door until they leave, every touchpoint is designed to be immersive, intuitive, and luxurious. We follow up with clients, solicit feedback, and continuously refine our service. We aim to build loyalty through personalization and consistency, not just aesthetics. This attention to detail is why we have been approached by megaprojects and why our customers return again and again. There is still room for growth and innovation in this space, especially for operators that prioritize consistency, personalization, and experience-driven service delivery. Our goal is not to be the biggest, but to be the most trusted name in Saudi Arabia's premium wellness sector.

How do you define success for Aurora Spa in the coming years?
For us, success is multifaceted. First, we have already been approached by developers of Saudi giga-projects who want Aurora Spa to be part of their ecosystems. That recognition alone is a success. It means that what we have built resonates with the country's larger vision of lifestyle excellence. But beyond expansion, success for me is measured in client satisfaction. In the wellness business, your most powerful metric is the return rate and loyalty of your customers. If we can maintain a consistently high level of satisfaction, even as we scale, that is true success.. ✖

BIO

Majid Almanea is the founder and CEO of Aurora Spa & Wellness, a leading male-only luxury spa in Riyadh. With a background in HR and organizational development, and certifications including CIPD Level 5 and BSP, Almanea is passionate about redefining men's wellness in Saudi Arabia through immersive experiences that blend nature, hospitality, and thoughtful design.



الملكة و السلطانة و السيدة وعريقة النسب

THE QUEEN, THE EMPRESS, THE LADY OF NOBLE LINEAGE

Khatoun Spa is a one-of-a-kind destination where beauty, wellness, and tradition meet.
We bring together all services under one roof, including massage therapies, hammam rituals, beauty and herbal treatments.

HERITAGE *and luxury*

Khatoun Spa stands as a premier destination for those seeking an authentic and rejuvenating spa experience in Riyadh. The spa is renowned for its stunning interior design, showcasing a blend of traditional Arabian aesthetics and modern elegance.

Princess Muneerah bint Turki bin Fahad Al Faisal Al Frahan Al Saud
FOUNDER,
KHATOUN SPA

How does Khatoun Spa's vision of merging Arab heritage with modern luxury shape its identity as a cultural and wellness landmark in the Kingdom?

At Khatoun Spa, we see ourselves as a refined destination where the beauty of Arab heritage meets modern luxury. Our vision is to transform moments of care into extraordinary experiences that inspire the senses and nurture the soul. As wellness becomes a growing lifestyle priority in the Kingdom, we aim to be more than a spa; we aspire to be a cultural and wellness landmark that reflects the evolving aspirations of our community. We have created a holistic environment that radiates serenity and calm, thoughtfully balancing authenticity with modernity. Every detail, from architectural elements to sensory touches, reflects cultural identity while embracing contemporary elegance. This harmony ensures that every guest feels transported into a private oasis where relaxation becomes effortless. We reimagine traditional Arabic bath rituals with a modern touch aligned with global luxury standards. Alongside these, we offer a curated selection of skincare, body, and hair treatments tailored to the refined tastes of our clientele. Each service is designed with precision to deliver an experience that is both culturally rich and globally relevant.

What strategies enable Khatoun Spa to maintain exclusivity while expanding its client base through organic growth and selective collaborations?

We take pride in our organic growth. Most of our visitors come through personal recommendations, reflecting the trust and satisfaction we cultivate. This word-of-mouth success turns our clients into true brand ambassadors. Moving forward, we plan to strengthen our presence through carefully chosen collaborations and targeted marketing strategies, ensuring that our growth enhances rather than dilutes the exclusivity that defines us. Collaborations with luxury hotels and premium brands allow us to extend our presence into environments that align with our standards of refinement. These partnerships enhance the value of our guests' experiences and strengthen our positioning within the luxury wellness market. They also open new avenues for growth, reinforcing both our brand prestige and our contribution to the broader wellness ecosystem.

What systems and training practices does Khatoun Spa implement to ensure consistent excellence and uphold its promise of luxury?

We believe true excellence lies in the details, which is why we invest heavily in continuous training for our teams by not only refining technical expertise, but by cultivating a deep sense of hospitality. We follow strict operational protocols and the highest quality benchmarks to ensure every service reflects our luxury promise. This dedication allows us to redefine the spa experience in Riyadh.

What is Khatoun Spa's strategic vision for achieving regional leadership in wellness and beauty by 2026 while preserving its core values of privacy and exclusivity?

We are moving forward with confidence toward becoming a leading regional destination for wellness and beauty. Our approach to growth is deliberate and thoughtful, prioritizing privacy, exclusivity, and uncompromising quality. By expanding with care, we aim to elevate our client's journeys and position Khatoun Spa as a trusted reference point for refined wellness across the region. ✖

BIO

Muneerah Al Saud is an architect and interior designer with a deep passion for exploring ancient civilizations and rich history. She graduated from the University of Cambridge, where she studied architecture, and then continued her specialization in interior design. She is fluent in four languages, enriching both her personal and professional experiences. Throughout her career, she has contributed to the execution of several distinguished projects and was lead designer for interior designs of several private homes and properties. She always strives to blend authenticity with modernity, focusing on highlighting the unique identity of each project in a distinctive way.

HEALTHCARE *& Medtech*

Saudi Arabia's healthcare and life sciences sector is undergoing a fundamental transformation, guided by Vision 2030's commitment to quality, accessibility, and innovation. With rising investment, digital health integration, and a growing focus on preventive care, the Kingdom is building a modern ecosystem that prioritizes both patient outcomes and technological advancement. Major reforms are driving the shift toward privatization and value-based care, while partnerships with global leaders are accelerating the adoption of cutting-edge medical technologies and AI-driven solutions. From world-class hospitals and telemedicine platforms to medtech startups pioneering local solutions, Saudi Arabia is redefining healthcare delivery across the region. The result is a system designed not only to meet the needs of a young and dynamic population but also to position the Kingdom as a regional hub for medical excellence, research, and innovation. ✖



Image: Leo Morgan

Riyadh First Health Cluster & King Saud Medical City – The Health Safety Net of Riyadh

Leadership in the Healthcare Transformation Landscape:

At the forefront of Saudi Arabia's healthcare transformation, the Riyadh First Health Cluster (RFHC) stands as one of the Kingdom's largest and most integrated healthcare networks. It comprises 19 healthcare facilities, including one medical city, three specialized hospitals, fifteen general hospitals, and 160 primary healthcare centers, serving more than 3.6 million beneficiaries across a vast area of Riyadh.

With a total capacity of 4,200 beds, the Cluster continues to redefine access, quality, and continuity of care through a unified system that connects prevention, treatment, and specialized services under a single vision of excellence.

King Saud Medical City – The Health Safety Net of Riyadh:

At the heart of this transformative ecosystem stands King Saud Medical City (KSMC), proudly recognized as "The Health Safety Net of Riyadh." It is one of the Kingdom's largest tertiary and referral hospitals, playing a pivotal role in managing life-threatening emergencies, complex surgeries, and critical cases referred from across the Central Region.

Excellence in Critical and Emergency Care:

In 2024, the KSMC received 6,457 life-threatening cases from around the kingdom period, total ICU admissions reached 11,189, it included 460 major trauma cases, 2,863 orthopedic cases, and 367 burn cases.

Between January and September 2025, KSMC received 4,262 critical cases referral from other hospitals in the region and the kingdom, total admission to the ICU reached 8,760, including 259 major trauma cases, 2,363 orthopedic cases, and 260 burn cases – reaffirming its position as a national leader in critical and emergency care.

Care Outcomes – National Excellence with Global Standards:

KSMC consistently achieves some of the highest care outcomes in the Kingdom, with an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Standardized Mortality Rate (SMR) of 0.906, reflecting exceptional efficiency and superior quality in delivering critical care – further solidifying its role as one of Saudi Arabia's leading advanced care centers.



New Projects:

As part of the ongoing efforts to enhance Riyadh's healthcare system, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, Governor of Riyadh Region, in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Fahad bin Abdulrahman Al-Jalajel, Minister of Health, inaugurated several projects at King Saud Medical City during 2025, including the new Women's Health Hospital and Children's Hospital.

The new hospitals aims to improve healthcare services for women and children of Riyadh and advanced cutting edge technology by providing specialized medical care through a modern and fully integrated tower that includes 500 beds, and a total cost of 571 million Saudi Riyals.



Academic Excellence – Empowering National Talent & Sharing Knowledge Globally:

King Saud Medical City (KSMC), accredited by the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS), offers 84 training programs and graduated 228 board certified physicians from its Saudi Board programs last year. It also provides 6 specialized nursing diploma programs in general, specialized, and critical care, and trained 2,610 medical students and trainees from government and private medical institutions, reinforcing its role as a national hub for education and training.

KSMC hosts international conferences that attract global experts and showcase Saudi medical practices and applied research, while its professionals actively participate in global forums to exchange knowledge and share experiences. Through its digital transformation, KSMC also broadcasts advanced surgeries and innovative treatments virtually worldwide, reflecting Saudi Arabia's commitment to medical innovation and global knowledge exchange.

Scientific Research – A Pillar of Innovation and Advancement:

In 2024, KSMC published 288 peer-reviewed scientific papers in reputable journals, up from 121 in 2020, demonstrating continuous progress in evidence-based practice, clinical research, and innovation that enhances patient outcomes and supports national healthcare development.

Vision for the Future – Sustainable Excellence and Global Leadership:

Aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program, KSMC aims to be a global model of advanced medicine, shaping the future of healthcare in Riyadh and setting new standards of excellence and innovation nationally and internationally.



REINVENTING *healthcare*

The Riyadh First Health Cluster is a regional entity under the Saudi Ministry of Health that provides healthcare services to over 3.9 million people in Riyadh through a network of 157 primary care centers and 18 general and specialized hospitals.

Saleh Abdullah Al-Tamimi
CEO,
RIYADH FIRST HEALTH CLUSTER, MINISTRY OF HEALTH

How is your institution strategically positioned within Saudi Arabia's broader healthcare transformation under Vision 2030?

The Riyadh First Health Cluster is a critical implementation arm of Vision 2030's healthcare transformation agenda. Our mandate is not only operational; we are deeply embedded in the strategic objectives of the Kingdom. One of our most ambitious goals is to increase the life expectancy of Saudi citizens to 80 years by 2030, up from around 78 today. This target symbolizes the nationwide commitment to healthier living, early prevention, and sustainable care. Vision 2030, with its pillars of a vibrant society, an ambitious nation, and a thriving economy, is inseparable from population health. We cannot build these pillars without healthy citizens. Our role within this ecosystem is to transform how healthcare is delivered, accessed, and perceived, ensuring that it contributes meaningfully to these wider national goals.

What is the role of primary healthcare in this shift, and how are you fostering public trust in the GP model?

Historically, Saudi patients have bypassed GPs, going directly to specialists and hospitals, even for basic ailments. This has overloaded our secondary and tertiary care facilities and contributed to inefficiencies. We are actively reversing that trend by rebuilding trust in primary care. Our strategy includes investing in well-trained family physicians, upgrading primary health centers, and positioning these clinics as the first point of contact for citizens. When patients trust their GPs, they are more likely to follow preventive care routines, adhere to treatment plans, and avoid unnecessary hospital visits. This cultural and structural shift is vital, and we are already seeing positive momentum. We have increased the number of board-certified family physicians working in primary care centers from 30 in 2018 to 250 now, aiming for 450 by 2030. Total visits to primary care centers increased from 850,000 in 2018 to 3.5 million in 2024.

How can the private sector play a more active role in this domain?

This is an area with untapped potential. The private sector has tremendous marketing reach and creative capabilities that can be harnessed for public health education. Campaigns such as turning the Kingdom Tower pink for breast cancer awareness have a powerful visual and emotional impact. These efforts build trust, promote early screening, and engage the public in meaningful ways. So far, our collaboration with the private sector has focused more on service provision than community outreach. That needs to change. We invite companies to co-create awareness campaigns, sponsor educational initiatives, and contribute to a culture of health literacy across the Kingdom.

What are the unique challenges and opportunities of delivering equitable healthcare services across both urban and rural parts of your cluster?

Geographic disparity is one of our toughest challenges. Major cities attract the best talent, while rural regions often struggle to retain healthcare workers. This creates a quality gap. In rural towns and villages, we rely heavily on expatriate medical staff, which adds complexity to long-term workforce planning. These underserved areas represent both a challenge and an opportunity. We will be exploring PPPs to deliver targeted services in rural zones where internal capacity is limited. Whether through mobile clinics, telemedicine, or direct outsourcing, we are committed to narrowing the urban-rural healthcare divide.

What final message would you like to share with international investors and partners regarding the future of healthcare in Saudi Arabia?

Saudi Arabia is not simply reforming its healthcare sector but reinventing it. From policy and financing to technology and service delivery, every aspect is being reimagined to support a sustainable, efficient, and patient-centered system. We welcome international stakeholders who understand that success in this environment requires more than commercial ambition. It requires alignment with national goals, long-term thinking, and a shared commitment to quality and equity. The opportunities are vast for those ready to partner with purpose. ✖

BIO

Saleh Abdullah Al-Tamimi is the CEO of the Riyadh First Health Cluster, a member of Health Holding Company, overseeing one of the Kingdom's largest healthcare networks, including King Saud Medical City, 18 general hospitals and 165 primary care centers, serving a population of 1.9 million, and a catchment area extending for 600km, down to Wadi Aldawasir, with an annual operating budget of SAR8.5 billion. In this role, he leads strategic initiatives to implement Vision 2030's healthcare objectives, driving enhancements in population health, digital transformation, and system-wide efficiency. Previously, AlTamimi held multiple executive leadership positions at both private and public sectors.



SAUDI *success*

Since its inception in 1922 as a single pharmacy, Tamer Group has evolved into a multifaceted business enterprise, spanning key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, logistics, and investments.

Ayman Tamer
CHAIRMAN & MANAGING PARTNER, TAMER GROUP

In 2022, Tamer Group celebrated its centenary. What key milestones do you attribute to the company's success over the past century?
It is critical for any company to consistently reinvent itself. What used to be a competitive advantage may not be the recipe for future success. The market landscape is evolving, and Tamer consistently strives to be proactive. Our distribution business has reached a vital milestone, with our market share in pharma exceeding 21%. Tamer produces an array of pharmaceutical, biological, and medical products locally via its three manufacturing arms. Our dedicated vertical logistics solidifies its value proposition as a one-stop shop for its partners and customers. Most importantly, following our venture into e-commerce and the B2C domain, we now own the largest mother, child, and baby vertical in the region and have launched our digital-only retail pharma in KSA as well as VitaCare, a digital wholesaler that caters to SMEs. KSA remains our focus market, as healthcare and logistics are well positioned sectors for future growth. Currently, 99% of our business activities is based in Saudi Arabia, and we will continue to serve the market with the best interest. We remain firmly optimistic on the outlook for Saudi Arabia, as we have been for the last 100 years.

In what ways has Tamer Group aligned its strategies with the Kingdom's vision for economic diversification?
Vision 2030 is our business blueprint, as increasing private-sector participation in healthcare coupled with sectorial transformation is a major opportunity. Positioning Saudi as a logistics hub connecting three continents will unleash the logistics sector across its value chain. Most importantly, the diversification of the Saudi economy and the increased role of SMEs in the country's GDP offer immense opportunities for start-ups and the entrepreneurial space.

Localization and "Made in Saudi" are pivotal elements of Vision 2030. How does Tamer Group support the local manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Saudi Arabia?
Tamer Group is doubling down on localization. Our pharma vertical manufacturing firm SAJA is tapping into biosimilars and will increase its capacity. Our JV with Molnlycke to build a second facility to serve the entire Middle East region and Iran is also a great success story for Tamer that serves the Vision 2030's objectives.

Tamer Group is deeply committed to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles. How has this commitment influenced the company's strategic direction?
Tamer Group's commitment to ESG principles has significantly shaped its strategic direction, driving sustainability and social responsibility at the core of our business. Environmentally, we have taken steps toward greener energy solutions, such as installing solar panels in our distribution facilities, generating over 20,000kWh of electricity in 2023, with plans to expand renewable energy use across our operations. Socially, we have invested over SAR9.5 million in community initiatives, focusing on education and skill-building programs, and have prioritized employee development to create a digitally proficient workforce. In governance, we continue to strengthen transparency, ethical conduct, and accountability. ESG is now integrated into Tamer Group's short- and long-term plans, influencing decisions at all levels. We are currently developing a comprehensive ESG strategy with specific targets, performance metrics, and initiatives that will reduce our carbon footprint, support community well-being, and enhance corporate governance. This approach not only aligns with global sustainability standards, but also ensures long-term success, building trust with our stakeholders and reinforcing our commitment to positive social and environmental impact.

Looking ahead, what are Tamer Group's key priorities and strategic initiatives for driving sustainable growth and innovation in the healthcare and wellness sector, both locally and regionally?
The group has devised a three-year roadmap on technology transformation and innovation. We plan to invest over SAR100 million in the next three years to revamp our IT operating model, leveraging big data, AI, and cybersecurity, among others. We are confident that seamless data integration and market insights will be extremely valuable for our partners in the healthcare and wellness value chain. ✖

BIO

As the third generation to steer the family business, Ayman Tamer has been instrumental in propelling Tamer Group to unprecedented heights, all while upholding its core values and unwavering commitment to excellence. In addition to his leadership at Tamer Group, he is widely recognized for his philanthropic efforts and dedication to social responsibility. He has spearheaded numerous healthcare initiatives across Saudi Arabia, focused on improving access to quality healthcare and aligning with the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030. Ayman Tamer is celebrated as a visionary in the Middle East's healthcare sector, known for his steadfast dedication to sustainability, innovation, and driving positive economic and social change.

TAMER

Empowering Communities Through Trusted Solutions

Tamer Group Introduces the State-of-the-Art Logistics Park

200,000
SQM Land

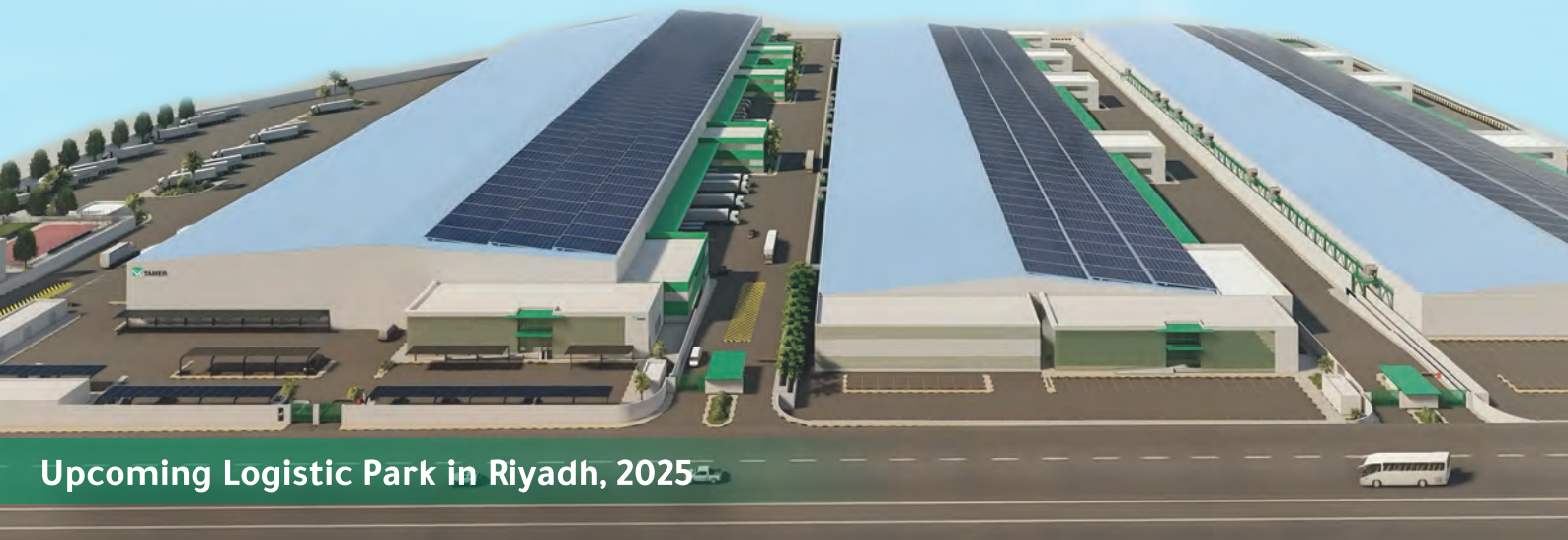
Automated
Piece-Picking Solution

120,000
Pallet Position

6 WM
Solar Power

LEED Certified
ESG benefits

100
Loading Docks



Upcoming Logistic Park in Riyadh, 2025



BIO

Dr. Nayef bin Dajim is a distinguished Saudi medical professional and healthcare leader renowned for his contributions to the development of Saudi Arabia's health sector. With a strong background in medicine and healthcare, Dr. Dajim has held several prominent positions, playing a key role in shaping health and innovation across the Kingdom. His commitment to excellence and patient-centered care has earned him respect both nationally and internationally. Aligned with Vision 2030, Dr. Dajim is a driving force behind localizing healthcare industries and shaping the Kingdom's medical device manufacturing ecosystem, promoting innovation, self-sufficiency, and global competitiveness in the sector.

Dr. Nayef bin Dajim
CEO,
RAMEEM

How does RAMEEM contribute to building a robust local medical manufacturing ecosystem?

Vision 2030 has been a cornerstone of our strategy. Our focus is not just on manufacturing, but also on acquiring the know-how and establishing a knowledge base locally. Unlike companies that bring in partially completed products from abroad, we chose to build every aspect of our process in-house. From designing to manufacturing and distribution, we have ensured that everything aligns with international standards. This approach required significant investments in time, money, and effort, but it is essential for creating a truly self-reliant ecosystem. Moreover, our team's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical importance of local production and self-sufficiency in the medical sector.

What message would you like to share with stakeholders and aspiring entrepreneurs in the healthcare sector?

My message is simple: perseverance and a commitment to quality are key. The healthcare sector demands precision, trust, and constant innovation. By focusing on these principles and leveraging the support provided by Vision 2030, we can achieve great things for Saudi Arabia and beyond. To aspiring entrepreneurs, I would say, don't shy away from challenges. With the right vision and determination, you can turn obstacles into opportunities. I would also like to emphasize the importance of collaboration. No success is achieved in isolation. By working together with stakeholders, government agencies, and industry leaders, we can collectively elevate the standards of healthcare in the region. At RAMEEM, we are committed to playing our part in this transformative journey. ✖



BIO

Mutasim Alireza is CEO of Magrabi Health Group, and has a lifetime dedicated to excellence in the eye healthcare field within the MENA region. During his 27-year tenure as CEO and partner, he has led the massive expansion of Magrabi Health while achieving top scores in local and international quality accreditation. He is also chairman of the board of AMI Saudi Arabia LTD, a leading hospital operation and management company in KSA, and a board member of Imdad, a leading company of aesthetic medicine in the Middle East.

Mutasim Alireza
CEO,
MAGRABI HEALTH

How is Magrabi Health addressing gaps in dental and aesthetic care?

We identified significant gaps in specialized, high-quality dental care and have made it a priority to address them. Our aim is to establish the largest integrated dental network in the region within the next three years. This involves acquiring existing clinics and building new ones to ensure coverage beyond urban centers. Our approach integrates top dental talent, advanced technology, and seamless patient experiences. In addition, we are expanding into aesthetics, including dermatology and plastic surgery. We plan to launch new centers under a distinct brand, with the first locations set to open in 2025. These centers will focus on providing state-of-the-art services in a rapidly growing field. By diversifying our offerings, we not only meet market demand, but also enhance our ability to serve patients comprehensively.

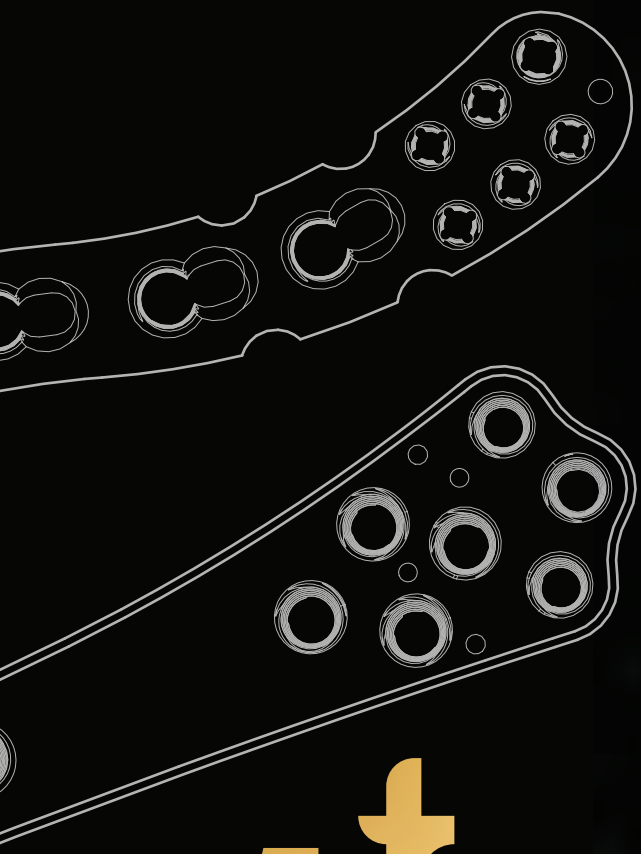
Can you highlight a recent initiative or project that demonstrates Magrabi Health's impact?

One of our most exciting initiatives is a nationwide diabetic retinopathy screening program. Diabetes is prevalent in Saudi Arabia, and one of its first effects is often on eyesight. Early detection is crucial, as many patients do not notice symptoms until significant damage has occurred. We have partnered with Digital Diagnostics to implement a screening system that will be rolled out across the country. Starting in Riyadh and the Eastern Province, this program will provide complimentary screenings, helping thousands of patients identify potential issues early. This project exemplifies our commitment to leveraging technology for public health. ✖

رميم
rameem
Empowering Healthcare Solutions

SAUDI MADE

رؤية VISION 2030
المملكة العربية السعودية
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA





1st

أول شركة سعودية متخصصة
في صناعة مزروعات العظام

Saudi Manufacturing Company for Titanium Medical Implants



HEALTHY *societies*

SPIMACO has been a key pillar of the Kingdom's healthcare and pharmaceutical sector since its founding in 1986. Today, it operates seven manufacturing facilities and exports to more than 19 countries.

Ahmed Aljedai
VICE CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPIMACO

How would you define the company's current role within the evolving healthcare ecosystem?

From the beginning, our mission has been rooted in the concept of medicine security, a strategic imperative for any nation. Medicines are essential for human well-being, improving quality of life, and average life expectancy. Vision 2030 has amplified this mission by setting ambitious goals for health, economy, and quality of life. One of its health targets is to increase average life expectancy and improve quality of life. This is not just about treating illness, but about prevention, lifestyle changes, and making sure the medicines that prevent premature death and improve quality of life are available. When SPIMACO's was founded in 1986, we set out to manufacture high-quality pharmaceuticals locally, ensuring that essential medicines would be available regardless of global supply chain disruptions. Today, we operate seven manufacturing facilities and export to more than 19 countries. Our Qassim Manufacturing Complex, established in 1986, remains our flagship manufacturing site. We also hold a majority stake in the region's only Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) manufacturing facility, a crucial part of the vertical value chain that enhances national medicine security.

How critical is this API facility to Saudi Arabia's pharmaceutical independence and resilience?

Complete self-sufficiency is unrealistic for any country, because the global pharmaceutical landscape is vast and diverse. No single nation can produce every medicine, API, or novel therapy; however, what matters is identifying and securing the essential medicines, namely those considered standard of care by clinicians, without which patients would be at serious risk. Our API subsidiary is a step in the right direction. Though it does not produce everything, it covers a meaningful share of the essentials. Beyond chemicals, the medicines of today and tomorrow also include biologics, plasma-derived products, gene and cell therapies. Globally, the sector is evolving rapidly, though chemical APIs remain the foundation of many treatments. Looking ahead, we believe Saudi Arabia should expand capabilities into advanced therapeutics: producing cell lines for monoclonal antibodies, hormones, and vaccines; developing plasma fractionation facilities; and investing in gene and peptide technologies. We do not expect to do it all by ourselves, though we can lead in key areas for both Saudi Arabia and the wider MENA region, where such capabilities are still limited.

What differentiates SPIMACO's positioning and enables you to compete effectively?

Our differentiation rests on several pillars. The first is local manufacturing. "Made in Saudi Arabia" carries weight; not only because of national pride, but also because it reflects a high standard of quality. The Saudi Food and Drug Authority is ranked at maturity level 4 by WHO, putting it in the same league as the EMA, MHRA, and US FDA. This gives confidence to both domestic patients and international markets. Second, agility. During the pandemic, while global supply chains were collapsing, we were still able to produce critical medicines locally in record time. When production is in your own facilities, you can act decisively, without waiting on shipments or navigating geopolitical bottlenecks. Third, diversity and innovation. We are evolving from being a pure generics company into a hybrid model that includes biologics, biosimilars, and vaccines. We are co-developing first-in-class molecules with international partners, and we are addressing single-source product shortages by developing local alternatives. This is not only good for business, but is essential for patient care. Our R&D is both in-house and collaborative. We partner with companies from China, India, Europe, and North America to ensure a broad technology base and avoid over-reliance on any single partner. Finally, our manufacturing capabilities extend to an exceptionally wider range of dosage forms. Our high-potent facility allows us to manufacture complex drugs such as immunosuppressants, cytotoxic, antivirals and narrow therapeutic index agents, which is a rare capability in the region. Having all this under one roof is a significant advantage. ✖

BIO

Appointed in April 2025 as vice chairman and managing director of SPIMACO, Ahmed Aljedai leverages decades of clinical and leadership experience to advance the company's role in shaping Saudi Arabia's pharmaceutical landscape in line with Vision 2030. A pharmacist by training, he earned his doctor of pharmacy in the US and an MBA in the UK. Aljedai began his career at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, where he continues to practice as a clinical pharmacist in organ transplantation. He later served as assistant deputy minister for therapeutic affairs at the Ministry of Health before joining SPIMACO's board of directors, eventually becoming its chairman.



Image: Luiza Kamalova



Bassam Chahine
CEO,
SMC HEALTHCARE

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 emphasizes privatization and expansion of healthcare services. How is SMC aligning itself with these goals?
Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 serves as a transformative roadmap, and we are proud to play an integral role in advancing its healthcare objectives. Our commitment goes beyond merely providing quality care; we contribute to the Kingdom's goals by expanding access to healthcare, enhancing operational efficiency, and embracing privatization. A key element of our alignment with Vision 2030 is our strategic expansion plan, which includes opening three new hospitals in Riyadh by 2030.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, what are SMC's priorities?
As we look to 2025 and beyond, SMC is committed to an ambitious strategy that aligns with our vision for growth and innovation. By 2030, we aim to transform the healthcare landscape with the completion of three new state-of-the-art hospitals, including our third facility on Northern Ring Road currently under construction.

Mohammad Elkhoury
CEO (SAUDI ARABIA) & GENERAL MANAGER (MIDDLE EAST),
GE HEALTHCARE

Could you provide an overview of GE HealthCare's presence in Saudi Arabia and its alignment with Vision 2030's goals for healthcare transformation?
GE HealthCare has a long-standing global reputation as an industry leader, and our presence in Saudi Arabia is integral to our broader strategy. GE was initially a large conglomerate encompassing several businesses. Around 2023, GE HealthCare became a standalone entity. This transformation has allowed us to focus solely on healthcare, developing targeted solutions for diverse markets worldwide. Today, GE HealthCare is a USD20 billion company, employing around 51,000 people globally. In Saudi Arabia, GE HealthCare operates as a 100% foreign investment company.

What are GE Healthcare's key priorities for Saudi Arabia in the near future?
Our priorities align closely with Vision 2030's goals of improving healthcare accessibility, quality, and safety. One of our main objectives is to expand diagnostic capabilities in underserved areas. For instance, we recently deployed nine PET-CT machines across the Kingdom, significantly enhancing access to advanced cancer diagnostics.

Alungal Mohammed
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT,
ABEER MEDICAL GROUP

Could you provide an overview of Abeer Group and its role within the Saudi healthcare sector?
Abeer Group is a leading healthcare provider in Saudi Arabia, committed to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care across the Kingdom. Our role in the Saudi healthcare sector is multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of services from primary healthcare and specialized clinics to integrated hospital services. We aim to set new benchmarks for healthcare delivery in the region, ensuring that our facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by highly skilled professionals who are dedicated to patient well-being.

How has Abeer Group evolved since its establishment, particularly in terms of services and facilities?
Since its founding, Abeer Group has seen significant growth in both its service offerings and geographic presence. We started with primary healthcare clinics, but over the years, we have expanded into specialized care, including cardiology, and women's health services. Our facilities have grown to include state-of-the-art hospitals and diagnostic centers equipped with the latest technology to meet the diverse healthcare needs of our patients. This evolution has been driven by our commitment to adapting to the changing demands of the population and staying ahead of global healthcare trends.



Walid Fitaihi
CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER (IMC)

Can you share insights into the center's founding principles, growth, and future direction?
When we founded IMC in 2006, our mission was clear: we wanted to create more than just a hospital. We aimed to build a healthcare institution that approached healing holistically, where we treat not only the body but also the mind and soul. We believe that true healing transcends just physical recovery; it is about nurturing all aspects of a person's well-being. This philosophy has been at the heart of everything we do at IMC, and it continues to shape our patient care today.

Which specialty areas are currently the most in demand, and how does IMC ensure it stays at the forefront of medical advancements in those fields?
Currently, some of the most in-demand specialties include cardiology, oncology, and orthopedics. As lifestyle-related diseases become more common in the region, there is an increasing demand for specialized care in these areas.



Ahmed Al Nabit
GENERAL MANAGER,
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE

Can you provide an overview of the company's global operations?
Fresenius Medical Care, as a global leader in dialysis industry, is delivering advanced technology products and services through our network of 44 production facilities, more than 4,000 dialysis clinics, and more than 125,000 employees to more than 4.1 million dialysis patients in 150 countries.

What role does Fresenius Medical Care play in advancing renal care in the Kingdom, and how does the company align with the goals of Vision 2030?
Since Vision 2030 began, Fresenius Medical Care has recognized the high level of alignment of the vision with our long-term company strategic objectives, especially in delivering value-based health services that guarantee the highest value outcomes at the best cost. This alignment has encouraged the company to allocate high investments in Saudi Arabia as the healthcare sector transformation is granting an elite governance model that ensures high levels of transparency and operational excellence.



Yasser Joharji
CEO,
NAHDI MEDICAL COMPANY

Can you start by telling us about the company's transformation and its role in the Kingdom's ongoing acceleration?
For the last four decades, we have been dedicated to serving our guests by providing best-in-class health and wellness services. We are deeply rooted in the community and are inspired by global learnings that we adapt to serve our local audiences' needs. This philosophy ensures that we continuously add value to our guests' personal lives and businesses. While our mission may sound theoretical, we translate it into everyday actions. Every engagement with our guests is an opportunity to leverage our advanced supply chain capabilities, cutting-edge technology, and world-class talent.

Can you elaborate on Nahdi's approach to talent development?
Our employees are at the heart of our organization. Working in health and wellness is challenging—you serve guests who are often unwell or stressed, making emotional intelligence and empathy critical. To address this, we constantly invest in our employees growth, dedicating over 500,000 hours annually to training programs focused on both technical skills and customer service excellence.



Omar Bin Humaid
CEO,
MEDISERV

BIO

Omar Bin Humaid began his journey with MediServ in 2013 as product manager, and in 2014 was promoted to lab and blood bank department manager, achieving a remarkable fourfold increase in the lab division's revenue. His dedication and strategic acumen saw him rise to VP of commercial operations and government affairs in 2018. His exemplary leadership propelled him to acting CEO during the pandemic in 2020, and subsequently to CCO in 2021, where he showcased his ability to drive innovation and further strengthened MediServ's position in the industry. Recognized for his unwavering commitment, the MediServ Board appointed Bin Humaid to CEO in 2023.

What are the key factors driving MediServ's growth, and what challenges do you foresee as the healthcare sector evolves?

MediServ's growth is driven by several key factors. Our unwavering commitment to quality and reliability has earned us trust across the Kingdom. We continually adapt to the evolving needs of the healthcare sector by embracing cutting-edge technologies, expanding into underserved regions, and scaling to meet increasing demand. However, challenges are inevitable. The rapid pace of digital transformation requires significant investments in technology and skills development. The geographical diversity of Saudi Arabia adds complexity to logistics and service delivery, particularly in reaching remote areas consistently. Balancing cost efficiency with uncompromising standards as the sector shifts towards value-based care is another key challenge.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for MediServ in the coming years?

The transformation of Saudi Arabia's healthcare sector presents numerous opportunities for MediServ. One of the most exciting areas is the increasing emphasis on digital health, where technologies such as telemedicine and wearable devices are revolutionizing care delivery. We are actively exploring these innovations to stay ahead of the curve. Another opportunity lies in the growing focus on preventative and personalized healthcare. As awareness increases and patients demand more tailored solutions, there is significant potential for MediServ to expand its offerings in diagnostics and specialized services. Finally, the privatization efforts under Vision 2030 open doors for collaboration with both local and international partners, allowing us to scale our impact even further. ✖



Assaf Alsaab
CEO,
WASEEL

BIO

With over 19 years of professional experience in various industries, Assaf Alsaab is the CEO of Waseel, the leading healthtech provider in Saudi Arabia. Alsaab holds a bachelor's degree in computer science from Washington State University and an MBA and a master's degree in finance, both from the University of Tampa.

Can you shed some light on the strategy underpinning the company's operations?

Waseel is not just a company; it is a force for positive change. Our purpose, to enable technology for a better humankind and community, is the driving force behind every decision we make, every product we develop, and every partnership we forge. In a rapidly evolving tech landscape, where profit often takes precedence, our commitment to a purpose-driven approach sets us apart. Being a pioneer in transforming the health ecosystem means not only revolutionizing healthcare solutions but also fostering a holistic approach that considers the interconnectedness of technology, human well-being, and sustainable practices.

What are your main priorities for Waseel for the upcoming year?

Our focus is on assimilating new team members, reinforcing company culture, and solidifying revenue streams. With a record revenue streak since 2020, we are committed to continuing to break our own records every year. While new potential products are on the horizon, expanding the scale of existing, revenue-generating products remains our priority. As part of our strategic approach, we are committed to giving back to the community, and in 2025, we plan to explore effective ways to engage with universities, increasing awareness and attracting talent. ✖

MEDISERV
Medical Supplies & Services Co. Ltd.

Leading Medical Supplier
in Saudi Arabia

With decades of expertise, **Mediserv** leads in providing cutting-edge medical equipment, healthcare software, and reliable after-sales support. We are dedicated to shaping the future of healthcare in Saudi Arabia through innovation and excellence.

40+ **Years** of experience

50+ Industry-leading **partners**

1k+ Satisfied **customers**





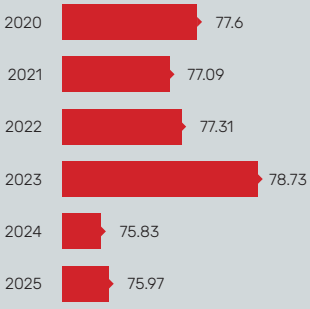
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LIFE EXPECTANCY

SOURCE: MACROTRENDS



QUALITY OF LIFE PROGRAM TARGETS

SOURCE: QUALITY OF LIFE

Saudi cities ranked in Top-100 livable by 2030	3
Employees in cultural sector by 2030	143K+
New entertainment attractions by 2030	600+
Days of cultural events by 2030	6,700+

PUBLIC SPACE AREA PER PERSON (SQM)

SOURCE: VISION 2030

Baseline (2015)	3.48
Actual value	6.53
Target value	4.75
Achievement rate	137.47%



Image: AFZAL KHAN MAHEEN

URBAN DESIGN & QUALITY OF LIFE: Policy Planning & The Pursuit of Livability

IDENTITY *First*

URBAN REGENERATION in Saudi Arabia is shifting from projects that merely expand a city's footprint to strategies that elevate how people live, move, and connect. Vision 2030 positioned quality of life as a national growth lever; today, that thesis is being operationalized across housing, mobility, public space, and cultural assets with policy discipline, data-led prioritization, and partnerships at scale.

At the center of this transition is a reframing of housing and urban planning as integrated socio-economic policy. As Majid Al-Hogail, Minister of Municipalities and Housing, emphasizes, the Kingdom's housing agenda "places the citizen at the center of development," with reforms to finance, regulation, and the mortgage market crowding in private investment and accelerating delivery. The result is a flywheel: predictable rules and deeper capital pools attract developers; execution capacity rises; and diversified neighborhoods—integrating schools, healthcare, retail, and transit—advance both inclusion and productivity.

Design standards are evolving just as quickly. As Nouf Al-Khaldi, Head of the National Urban Design Studio at the Ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing, notes, the Kingdom is "bringing cities back to the people." Newly issued architectural and urban guidelines emphasize flexibility, contextual relevance, and climate-appropriate materials alongside contemporary solutions. Capability is being decentralized through regional design studios in Al-Ahsa, Abha, and Taif, which localize best practices, democratize interpretation of codes, and expand the market of qualified practitioners. This is how policy becomes place: through consistent standards, shared know-how, and measurable outcomes.

Public-realm investment is the connective tissue. Initiatives such as Project Joy, which is delivering parks, walkways, and bike lanes, are stitching together previously isolated assets into human-scale networks of activity. Flagship corridors like Riyadh's Sports Boulevard translate strategy into daily habits, enabling non-motorized mobility, cooling the microclimate, and catalyzing adjacent enterprise from wellness to events. These networks are designed as platforms: open, inclusive, data-instrumented, and integrated with mass transit for first- and last-mile continuity.

Equally pivotal is an evolved partnership model. The Housing Program's scale-up of PPPs, coupled with real-estate investment vehicles across giga and megaprojects, structures bankable opportunities without compromising public purpose. King Salman Park exemplifies this approach: majority green space safeguarded for social value; carefully curated commercial zones that underwrite long-term operations; and governance frameworks aligning partners to sustainability, accessibility, and cultural resonance. The outcome is not simply a park, but an investable ecosystem that keeps delivering value long after ribbon cutting.

Two themes define the next chapter. First, livability is now a competitive strategy. As global cities vie for talent and capital, walkable neighborhoods, safe streets, abundant greenery, and cultural vibrancy are no longer amenities; they are economic infrastructure. Second, identity matters. Saudi urbanism is reclaiming a distinct aesthetic rooted in Salmani principles and regional materials, all while welcoming innovation that meets international standards. As Al-Khaldi underscores, the goal is authenticity: when one sees an image of a Saudi city, it should be unmistakably Saudi.

Urban regeneration in the Kingdom is therefore more than construction; it is policy in motion. It blends financing reform, design excellence, mobility integration, and private-sector partnership into a coherent blueprint for thriving, future-ready cities. Most importantly, it measures success where it matters: when residents do not just live in a place, they belong to it. ✖



Majid bin Abdullah Al-Hogail
MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL, RURAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

HOMESTYLE

The Saudi-US Investment Forum took place in Riyadh on May 13, 2025, bringing together major Saudi and US investors to reaffirm their long-standing partnerships.

BIO

Majid bin Abdullah Al-Hogail is the Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing of Saudi Arabia. He was appointed Minister of Housing in 2015. In addition, he was acting Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs in 2020 before the ministry merged with the Ministry of Housing. Al-Hogail has also served as chairman of the Real Estate General Authority since 2017.

THE HOUSING PROGRAM is a central pillar of Vision 2030. It is not just about building homes; it is about creating a vibrant society and a thriving economy. In Saudi culture, the family is at the heart of everything. That is why our goal has always been to place the citizen at the center of development. Since Vision 2030 was launched, we have transformed the entire housing ecosystem. This includes finance, regulation, and the growth of the mortgage market. For example, we have worked closely with capital markets to scale mortgage lending, which has grown from SAR150 billion to nearly SAR900 billion. This is a clear example of how public-private partnerships are enabling national development. When we started, Saudi homeownership stood at 47%. Today, we have reached 65.4%, and we are on track to hit our 70% target. Our growth of nearly 18 percentage points since Vision 2030 began demonstrates that housing is not only a social issue, but a driver of economic activity, job creation, and private investment. The role of the private sector is essential. There is a misconception that the government is doing it all; in reality, we rely heavily on private developers, financiers, and international partnerships. We are actively welcoming US developers to bring their expertise in smart cities, master-planned communities, and innovation in urban living. Many US developers are already present in the market, and their impact is visible in new residential communities across the Kingdom. We are also attracting US capital through the real estate and mortgage sectors, supported by regulatory reforms and new laws that make foreign investment more attractive than ever. Ultimately, the feeling that "Saudi Arabia is a second home" is something we hear often. But it is not just about the buildings, but the people. The human connection, shared ambition, and trust built between Saudi Arabia and the US over decades provide a solid foundation for a new era of urban and social development. We are proud to say that our cities are becoming destinations not just to visit, but to live and thrive in. ✖

> "It is not just about building homes; it is about creating a vibrant society and a thriving economy."

**Adapted from remarks made during the KSA-US Summit, May 14, 2025.*





HEART *and soul*

MoMAH is transforming cities through rapid public realm upgrades, heritage-rooted design standards, and sustainable infrastructure to boost livability, inclusivity, and investor confidence.

Ihab Alhashani
VICE MINISTER,
MINISTRY OF MUNICIPALITIES AND HOUSING (MOMAH)

How does MoMAH drive Saudi Arabia's urban transformation under Vision 2030?
We are transforming Saudi cities at unprecedented speed. In just under two years, we have delivered 16 million sqm of upgraded public realm, the equivalent of four Central Parks. Access to green space within 800m rose from 58% to 66%, enhancing property values considerably. Each intervention stimulates jobs and retail, and the model is replicable nationwide. We are building municipal capacity so cities deliver independently but within a national framework.

How do MoMAH's interventions support Vision 2030's socioeconomic goals, particularly community engagement and inclusive growth?
Vision 2030 is as much about social change as economic. Urban design must enable this transformation. Women's growing workforce participation, for instance, reshapes mobility, households, and public spaces. Architecture is shifting as well, with homes with larger windows, lower fences, and more communal orientation, moving beyond the old fortress model. As the minister often reminds us, our mission is not to build infrastructure but to enrich lives. Success is measured not by how many parks we build, but by whether those parks change how people live each day.

What is the intent of MoMAH's new architectural guidelines, and how will they shape Saudi urban identity?
Historically, cities grew from a functionalist model: rapid movement with little cultural coherence, making every city feel the same. However, Saudi Arabia is home to 19 distinct architectural identities, shaped by geography and centuries of tradition. This diversity is a national asset. Our guidelines aim to restore what was lost and reconnect cities with their heritage. By 2030, one will immediately know whether they are in the north or south based on the surrounding architecture. However, preserving identity does not mean rejecting modernity. The guidelines create the foundation for real distinction. In Paris, the city's overall compliance creates the backdrop for the Louvre or the Eiffel Tower to shine. Our aim is similar: create context so innovation flourishes. That is where interesting architecture happens.

How does MoMAH shape cities to build investor confidence?
Investors typically land in Riyadh, Jeddah, or Dammam, and their first impressions come from roads, greenery, and cleanliness: our domain. Capital follows regulatory clarity and delivery confidence. By unifying licensing, codes, and approvals, we have created predictability that attracts investment. With 300,000 public land parcels, MoMAH is among the Kingdom's largest platforms. We activate these assets strategically, turning real estate from "potential" to "deployed capital." Transaction volumes prove it, and the private sector now votes with its money.

How is MoMAH embedding sustainability into urban planning as cities prepare to double in size?
Sustainability is engineered into everything we do, mandated directly by His Royal Highness. Parks contribute to the Saudi Green Initiative. All new road projects must now use 30-45% recycled materials, creating a circular economy and new jobs in waste processing. Waste management is a personal priority: Saudi Arabia can turn waste into economic output, enabling municipalities and the private sector to meet national goals while creating new revenue streams.

What philosophy drives the Joy Program's rapid interventions, and how has it transformed public space delivery?
The challenge was making citizens feel reform quickly. Though roads and utilities matter, they are invisible. In contrast, parks transform neighborhoods in months. In two years, we have delivered 650 parks that are full everywhere and stay clean. The real driver was the execution model: MoMAH, municipalities, CSR sponsors, and developers all aligned. Each park is an investment node, raising value, stimulating retail, and creating community, namely tangible social and economic transformation with measurable ROI.

What are MoMAH's strategic targets for 2025, and which initiatives will define medium-term success?
Our strategy works on two timelines: long-term institutional change and short-term results citizens feel now. Architectural guidelines are a long-term shift; their impact will grow over years. Beyond waste management, 2025 priorities include investing in infrastructure, and expanding private-sector roles across the municipal value chain. Success means environmental progress, investor confidence, and citizen satisfaction. The ultimate test is simple: are cities better places to live than last year? If yes, we are on track. ✖

BIO

Ihab Alhashani is Vice Minister for the Municipal Sector at Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Municipalities and Housing, leading national programs in urban finance, sustainability, and digital transformation. His career spans public policy and investment, advancing partnerships that strengthen municipal governance and unlock new markets across real estate and infrastructure.



Nouf Al-Khaldi
HEAD OF THE NATIONAL URBAN DESIGN STUDIO, MINISTRY OF MUNICIPALITIES AND HOUSING (MOMAH)

BRIDGING *tradition and modernity*

The Ministry of Municipalities and Housing is responsible for the supervision and regulation of municipalities in the country. Aligned with Vision 2030, it aims to make cities not just livable, but also enjoyable.

How would you describe the country's current architectural and urban planning identity?

Historically, our urban design was deeply rooted in the sense of place, shaped by geography, climate, and locally available materials. In Riyadh, for example, residents built homes using mud from nearby wadis, creating natural insulation that adapted to the seasons. Along the Red Sea coast, Jeddah saw the use of coral in construction, with distinctive features like the "Rawasheen" facilitating ventilation and humidity control. Every region developed a distinct character; however, rapid urbanization and the need to standardize infrastructure during a period of explosive growth led to a homogenization of our cities. The focus was on connectivity, speed, and basic infrastructure, which came at the expense of architectural identity and human-scale design. Cities became less livable, with minimal regard for pedestrians, green spaces, or social interaction. Vision 2030 has been a turning point. It has marked a national recognition that livability and identity matter. Through initiatives such as the Saudi Architectural Map and Project Joy, we are reclaiming our urban spaces, restoring human-centric design principles, and reintroducing cultural authenticity. It is a phased transformation, but one that is very deliberate; bringing cities back to the people. The architectural guidelines are grounded in flexibility, inclusivity, and contextual relevance. One of our key principles is embracing traditional aesthetics while remaining open to innovation. For instance, we encourage the use of natural materials, not only for their aesthetic alignment with heritage, but for their environmental adaptability. Education and market awareness are also central to our rollout. Prior to launching the guidelines, we held numerous workshops with architectural firms, engineering consultancies, and government bodies to align expectations. Today, we are establishing regional design studios in cities like Al-Ahsa, Abha, and Taif to localize implementation and ensure consistency. These studios serve as knowledge hubs, offering workshops and acting as reference points. We aim to democratize the understanding of guidelines to ensure no single firm monopolizes interpretation and that the market remains balanced and inclusive.

In what ways is the ministry incorporating human-centric and inclusive design approaches into its national housing and regeneration strategies?

The core of good urban design is its ability to enhance everyday life. A well-designed city allows its residents to walk comfortably, find green spaces to relax, engage with their community, and access services efficiently. Through Project Joy, we are executing this vision. Since its inception, we have delivered over 16 million sqm of public space, built more than 500 parks and 600km of walkways, and created over 300km of bike lanes. More importantly, we are prioritizing connectivity. It is not just about building a park or a street; it is about integrating these elements into a cohesive neighborhood that encourages interaction and social engagement. Our tactical toolkits are now helping municipalities build connected, people-first environments rather than isolated interventions.

What are the key urban design and architectural trends that you believe will define the next chapter of development in the Kingdom?

Human-centricity will remain our north star. The shift from car to pedestrian-first cities is irreversible. We will also see greater focus on mixed-use, high-density, and transit-oriented development that enables accessibility and efficiency. Both environmental and cultural sustainability will define the next chapter. We will lean into local materials, energy-efficient designs, and resilient urban systems. But just as importantly, we will continue to value the intangible: emotional resonance, sense of place, and identity. Architecture in Saudi Arabia will be a bridge between past and future, tradition and modernity, policy and people. That is how we measure success: when people do not just live in a city, but feel connected to it. ✖

BIO

Nouf Al-Khaldi holds a master's degree in smart & sustainable cities from the Regional Planning Department at King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals and a bachelor of architecture from Woodbury University in the US. Before joining MoMRAH, she gained valuable experience in both the private and public sectors as an architect at JACOBS and as an urban code specialist at the Sharqiyah Development Authority. Her work focuses on enhancing the quality of life in Saudi cities through the application of sound urban design principles and guidelines aimed at strengthening local identities, improving the public realm, and creating vibrant, healthy, and sustainable communities. She currently leads the activation of the National Public Realm Transformation Initiatives, promoting high-quality and meaningful urban design practices across Saudi neighborhoods and cities.

INFOGRAPHIC
Ministry of Housing Architecture Characters Map

BLENDING
modernity and tradition

The Ministry of Municipalities and Housing, in partnership with the Development Authority Support Center (DASC), has introduced the Saudi Architecture Characters Map, defining distinct architectural styles tied to the Kingdom's geography and cultural heritage. Each style is expressed in three design typologies, namely traditional, transitional, and contemporary, giving architects flexibility while maintaining regional identity. Styles range from Central Najdi, Hejazi Coast, Sarawat Mountains, to Taif Highlands, the Tabuk Coast, and Al-Ahsa Oasis, among others; these draw on local materials and historic building methods reflecting climate, landscape and culture. Implementation kicks off in cities like Al Ahsa, Taif, Mecca, and Abha. The goal is to blend Saudi heritage with modern design, strengthen sustainability, boost design consistency, and enhance the built environment. ✖

Northern Najdi
Sikaka, Tabuk, Ar Ar

Central Najdi
Ar-Riyadh, Buraydah, Hail

Najran
Najran, Sharurah

Tabuk Coast
Khaybar, Mihd Adh Dhahab

Madinah Rural
Khaybar, Mihd Adh Dhahab

Inner Madinah
Al Madinah, Badr, Al Ais

Hejazi Coast
Jeddah, Yanbu, Rabigh

Taif Highlands
At Taif, Ash Shifa, Al Hada

Special Zones

Sarawat Mountains
Al Baha, Maysan, Baljurashi

Aseer Escarpment
Rijal Alma, Al Majardah

Tuhama Foothills
Harub, Mahayet Aseer, Bariq

Tuhama Coast
Jazan, Sabya, Al Birk

Farasan Islands
Farasan

Abha Highlands
Abha, Khamis Mushayt, Ballahmar

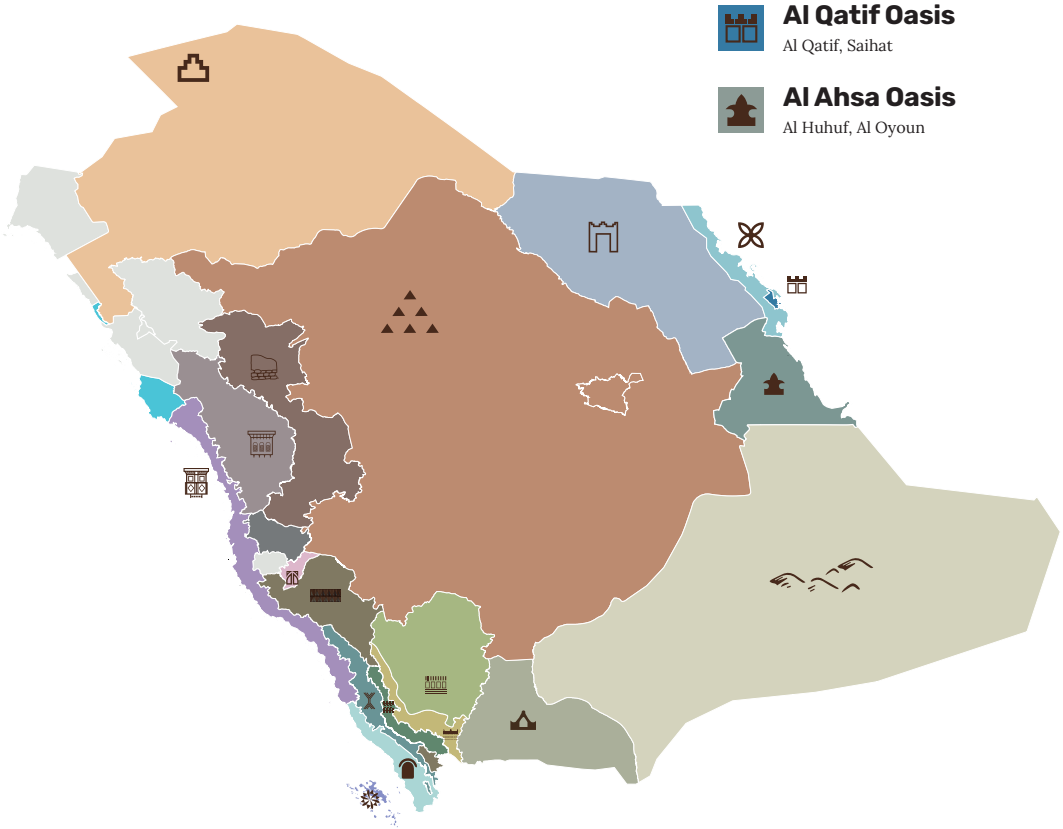
Bisha Desert
Bisha, Tathleeth

Eastern Najdi
Hafr Al Batin, Qaryat Al Ulya, Al Nairyah

East Coast
Ad Dammam, Ad Dhahran, Al Khobur

Al Qatif Oasis
Al Qatif, Saihat

Al Ahsa Oasis
Al Huhuf, Al Oyoun

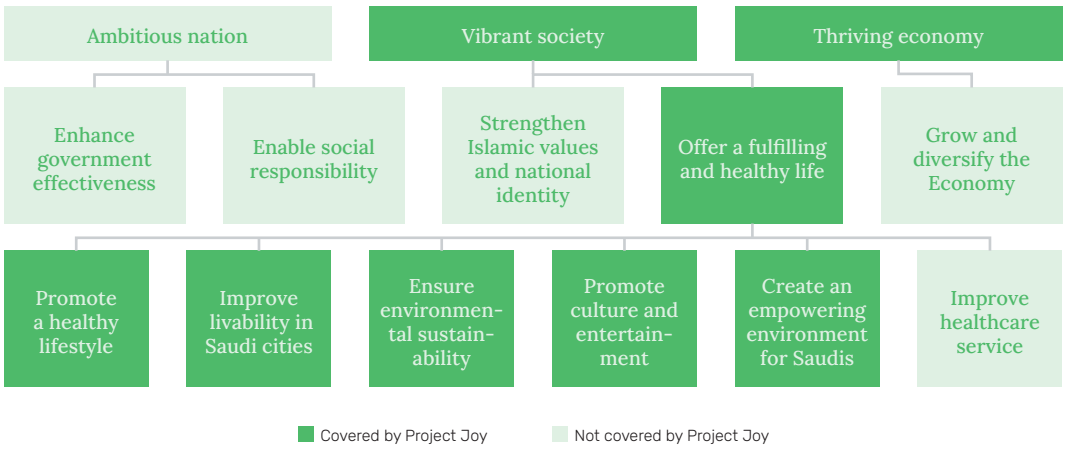


INFOGRAPHIC
Project Joy

LIVE *& breathe*

Launched in 2023, Project Joy is an urban interventions and parks development program that enhances the livability and visual appeal of Saudi cities. The initiative creates public spaces that are human-centric and promote healthy lifestyles, culture, sports, and recreation. Ultimately, the program aspires to position at least three Saudi cities among the world's top 100 most livable.

VISION 2030



VIBRANT SOCIETY, THRIVING ECONOMY



CELEBRATE DIVERSITY IN SAUDI ARABIA
A nation-wide set of principles recognize many landscapes, cultures, and climates



VISUAL QUALITY AND HUMAN SCALE
Ensuring visual and human scale for streets and public spaces



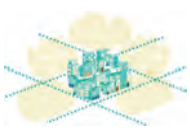
FLEXIBLE PUBLIC SPACES
Designing flexible public spaces as platforms for entertainment and events



WORLD-CLASS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
Human-centered design and green infrastructure to impact behavior



INVEST IN PUBLIC SPACES
Times Square revenue from businesses have risen by 71% after the transformation



A DENSE URBAN FABRIC
A dense urban fabric makes for a more efficient use of land and infrastructure



APPROPRIATELY SIZED STREETS
Street layouts have an impact on both quality of life and economic performance



INTEGRATE ART AND CULTURE
Integrate art and culture in key public spaces, making them visible and accessible to all



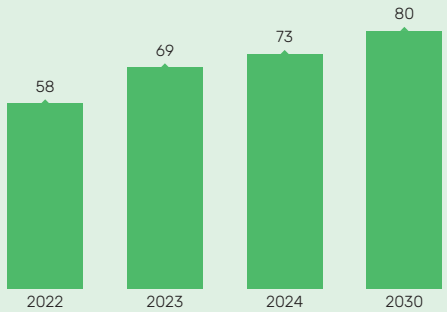
MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS
Attract talent and support ecosystems of SMEs through well-designed neighborhoods



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC SPACES
Encourage physical activity by designing people-first spaces

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, PROJECT JOY HAS REALIZED OVER 1,200 PARKS AND UIS, ACHIEVING SIZABLE IMPACT FOR THE COMMUNITY

ACCESSIBILITY (%)



This indicator measures the percentage of residents living within 800m of public spaces, reflecting the accessibility of these spaces for the population and the equitable distribution of public areas throughout the city.

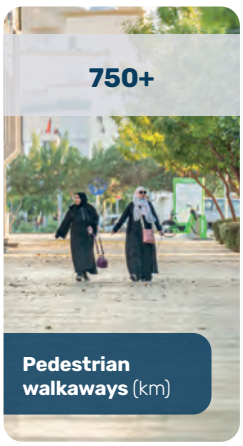
ACHIEVEMENTS

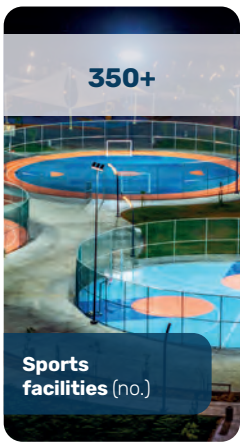
Over **900** parks implemented

More than **850** urban interventions

Total added area of **27M** sqm

THROUGH PROJECT JOY, SAUDI CITIES HAVE TRANSFORMED IN TERMS OF LIVABILITY WITH AN INCREASE IN RECREATIONAL & WELLBEING FACILITIES









COMPLETED PROJECTS













مجموعة روشن
ROSHN GROUP



INSIDE *Saudi Arabia's urban transformation*

Saudi Arabia's ambition to become a global destination for tourists and talent is manifesting in some of the most creative and disruptive urban designs of the 21st century. In this special report, we zoom in on how one multi-asset developer is blending innovation and heritage to re-imagine city living.

ACROSS SAUDI ARABIA, millions of tourists have discovered a destination that offers all of life's essential ingredients: diversity, culture, entertainment, sport, and community.

Visitors to the Kingdom today will find locals mingling with tourists and expats in open-air plazas, beautiful boutiques, and global cuisine houses. It's a scene that many will recognize from cities around the world. But in Saudi Arabia, it tells a deeper story of an entire country's transformation, unprecedented in pace and scale.

For decades, Saudi Arabia's residential, commercial, and leisure spaces were often developed from an asset-centric model. But that script has been rewritten, with multi-asset real estate developers like ROSHN Group creating destinations spanning commercial, entertainment, retail, tourism, sports, and more.

It is a story of how urban design, heritage, culture, sports, sustainability, and ambition are converging to create destinations that can host the world and could well provide a blueprint for cities of the future.

The key has been translating aspiration into reality. Masterplans have evolved over Nine integrated communities and mixed-use developments in progress nationwide, including projects like SEDRA and WAREFA in Riyadh, ALDANAH in the Eastern Province, and ALMANAR in Mecca. Each is designed as a complete ecosystem, where daily life unfolds within a short walk, whether to a school, a park, a mosque, or a café.

BUILDING BEYOND RESIDENTIAL

While ROSHN Group's early reputation was built on residential communities, its portfolio now reaches much further. The Group now delivers a much broader range of places where people not only live and work, but also experience life.

For instance, at ROSHN Front, the company's mixed-use destination in North Riyadh, the boundaries between work, leisure, and community are fluid. The development reimagines how people work, play, dine, shop, and share space, offering a cosmopolitan experience that reflects Saudi Arabia's openness.



Similarly, in Jeddah, ROSHN Group's MARAFY project is a striking example of urban development. Built around an 11km water canal, MARAFY is envisioned as a fully integrated waterfront destination, blending residential, commercial, leisure, and hospitality assets. It is a place designed for living, but also for visiting, exploring, and connecting.

Saudi Arabia's emergence as a global sporting destination has also been remarkable and is encapsulated by the crystalline ROSHN Stadium in Riyadh. With a 45,000-seat capacity and ecosystem of retail outlets, restaurants, and hospitality facilities, the stadium will be something few fans have ever experienced when they arrive for the 2034 FIFA World Cup.

WELCOMING THE WORLD

ROSHN Group's portfolio is expanding rapidly, with over four million square meters of gross leasable area dedicated to commercial, retail and hospitality developments. Integrated hotels, serviced apartments, and retail blocks are designed to meet international standards, supporting Saudi Arabia's goal of welcoming 150 million visitors by 2030.

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE?

Saudi Arabia's disruptive urban development is one of the main factors behind changing global perceptions of the Kingdom. Companies like ROSHN Group continue to break molds and reimagine what it means to live and work in a city. Every time the world gathers in Saudi Arabia, whether it's for sports tournaments, cultural events, or investment summits, visitors will experience this urban transformation first-hand. But what's truly exciting is that each visit is a chance to gaze through a window into what could well be the future of quality, sustainable urban living. ✖

IN NUMBERS

ROSHN Group will create

388K+

jobs

32%

of positions are held by women

Saudi Arabia aims to welcome

150MN

visitors by 2030

68%

of the global population will live in urban areas by 2050



A CITY *of wellbeing*

Sports Boulevard is an under-construction large-scale linear park located in Riyadh. At 135km, it is also one of the largest such projects in the world.

Jayne E. McGivern
CEO,
SPORTS BOULEVARD FOUNDATION

What impact has opening the first five stages had in terms of delivering on the long-term vision of the Sports Boulevard Foundation?
Opening the first five destinations was a turning point in bringing the Sports Boulevard vision to life. It affirms our commitment to creating a city shaped by health, accessibility and opportunity. These destinations, namely Wadi Hanifah, the Promenade, the Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University internal loop, the intersection at Prince Mohammed bin Salman Road and Prince Turki bin Abdulaziz Al-Awwal Road, and Phase One of Sands Sports Park, all reflect the project's purpose to enrich daily life through green mobility, diverse sports experiences, and inclusive spaces. Each destination acts as an anchor for community interaction and wellbeing. They are not just passive parks, but active platforms for physical and social engagement that advance Riyadh's urban transformation. This milestone also represents the opening of 83km of the Sports Boulevard's total 135km, meaning 40% of the project is now operational. More than 1 million visitors have engaged with the open zones' many of whom are participating in non-motorized mobility for the first time. Surveys show a rise in daily physical activity, improved perceptions of safety, and stronger community cohesion. Environmental indicators are also encouraging. In pilot zones, surface temperatures have decreased by up to 5°C due to landscaping and shade. The project supports walking, cycling, and horse riding across 135-km of shaded, tree-lined trails, all of which are contributing to reduced car usage and better air quality. We see signs of increased economic activity and property value uplift in neighboring areas, showing how the project is sparking broader urban regeneration.

Beyond real estate and retail, what other industries or sectors do you foresee emerging around the Sports Boulevard ecosystem?
The Sports Boulevard will foster an entire ecosystem. We expect major growth in sports tech, such as analytics platforms, fitness wearables, and smart infrastructure. Event management and live performance industries will also flourish, supported by facilities such as theatres, exhibition centers, and art forums. Wellness tourism is another area of momentum. With Riyadh's climate, world-class amenities, and growing global interest, we are well-positioned to attract health-focused visitors. This project will be a hub not just for recreation but economic diversification in line with Vision 2030.

With Saudi Arabia becoming a hub for international sporting events, what role will the Sports Boulevard play in anchoring such events in Riyadh?
The Sports Boulevard is designed to host international events. From the Global Sports Tower to multi-sport venues and open spaces, the infrastructure supports world-class competitions and public festivals alike. We are planning partnerships with federations to attract global tournaments, and we are exploring the creation of permanent sports institutions, including training academies, innovation labs, and athlete performance centers. The project will serve as a platform for both elite and community-level events, anchoring Riyadh's role in global sports.

As you look toward 2026, what will success look like for the Sports Boulevard?
Success for the Sports Boulevard will be measured in multiple ways. Of course, we aim to meet our development milestones, grow visitor numbers, and attract sustained investment. But the deeper measure is cultural; we want to see people living differently, more actively, more connected to nature, and more engaged with their community. If families are walking and cycling together, if children grow up identifying with the spaces we have built, if Riyadh becomes known worldwide as a city of wellbeing, then we will have truly succeeded. ✖

BIO

Jayne E. McGivern is one of the world's leading construction executives with more than 35 years of experience in infrastructure and urban redevelopment megaprojects management. She has managed various world-renowned projects, including the redevelopment of the Millennium Dome, The O2 Arena, and the new Wembley Stadium in London. McGivern was the president of development and construction at the global entertainment business, Madison Square Garden Company, where she oversaw the construction and delivery of the MSG Spheres. She was also on the board of directors of Skanska AB, The London Legacy Development Corporation, and Crossrail.



THE GREEN *heart of Riyadh*

King Salman Park Foundation is developing a 16sqkm site in central Riyadh that will include residential properties, office buildings, retail and F&B outlets, MICE infrastructure, numerous museums and cultural attractions, and more.

George Tanasijevich
CEO,
KING SALMAN PARK FOUNDATION

How will King Salman Park contribute not only to Riyadh's livability and green space goals, but also to its cultural and economic repositioning on the global stage?

King Salman Park is far more than just a park; it is a bold statement of Saudi Arabia's urban renaissance, one of the four landmark projects shaping Riyadh's future, an emblem of the country's commitment to building cities that put people, nature and culture at the heart of progress. Whether you are cycling along the Loop's shaded trails, spending an afternoon at the Royal Arts Complex, or simply enjoying time outdoors with your family, the Park can offer something personal, meaningful and lasting. Our vision is to create an inclusive, vibrant, and truly inspiring destination where culture and creativity flourish, wellness and nature are part of the urban rhythm, and public spaces do not just serve a function but enrich lives. When thinking about Riyadh's future as a leading global city, projects like King Salman Park are essential; they reflect a broader shift in how we think about cities, as ecosystems that must nurture people and the environment in equal measures. The scale is impressive, but I believe it is the quality, the character, and the intentionality behind King Salman Park-that will truly set it apart. It is something that has not been done before in an arid climate. It rebalances the urban fabric, not only by increasing green space per capita, but potentially reducing the temperature in the park between 2 and 10 degrees. That is done by offering a new model for how urban public spaces can contribute to cultural vibrancy, economic opportunity and sustainable living. This is a project that will put Riyadh on the map, for its architecture and size, but more importantly for its heart.

How do you ensure the park becomes a generational legacy for Riyadh?

As one of Riyadh's four gigaprojects under Saudi Vision 2030, King Salman Park contributes to the Kingdom's goals of a vibrant society, thriving economy, and ambitious nation. When we talk about sustainability, we think in four dimensions: environmental, cultural, operational and social. All are deeply interconnected, and all are essential to the Park's legacy. Environmentally, we have taken on the challenge of building a truly green oasis in the heart of Riyadh. In addition to the trees, we are planting over 600 species, 400 of which are new to the Kingdom. That requires serious investment in the right systems to help them thrive. We are using recycled water, smart irrigation technologies and have established dedicated nurseries to support landscape health in our desert climate. There is even a visitor nursery, designed to open its doors to schools and families so that learning about biodiversity and climate responsibility becomes a hands-on, generational experience. However, sustainability is also cultural. The park is a space that honors Saudi heritage while creating platforms for new voices and creative expression. Architecturally rooted in Salmani, our buildings offer open-access programming; we are embedding culture into the everyday rhythm of Riyadh. We want people to feel like art and heritage belong to them, that they are not hidden behind museum walls, but alive and present in public life. Socially, we are deeply committed to being a good neighbor. That means listening to the needs of the surrounding communities, ensuring the Park remains welcoming and accessible. With access to five metro stations and 10 bus stops integrated into the layout, 75% of Riyadh's population will be able to reach us in under 30 minutes. We are reconnecting people to their city in a healthier, more inclusive way. ✖

BIO

The CEO of King Salman Park Foundation, George Tanasijevich previously served as president & CEO of Marina Bay Sands for nine years. Tanasijevich also worked as managing director of global development for Las Vegas Sands Corp for 11 years, focused on development opportunities in new markets in Asia. Prior to his involvement in the company's Singapore activities, Tanasijevich was based in Macau as director of development, responsible for the coordination of various commercial activities related to its Cotai Strip projects. Tanasijevich previously served as senior vice president/ equity markets at CapitaLand Limited in Singapore.

PARK *life*

A vast new regenerative outdoor space is redefining the very nature of Saudi Arabia's capital city.

SAUDI ARABIA'S monumental Vision 2030 is a comprehensive reshaping and rebranding of the Kingdom that spurs sustainable national development and public welfare while stimulating investor appeal. Small wonder, then, that the accompanying giga-projects are impressive not merely in scale, but in scope. Among these flagship schemes is one that presents a futuristic model for living. An unprecedented mixed-use green area that surpasses anything previously achievable in its geography; King Salman Park. In the words of George Tanasijevich, the CEO of the King Salman Park Foundation, "King Salman Park is [...] a bold statement of Saudi Arabia's urban renaissance, one of the four landmark projects shaping Riyadh's future, an emblem of the country's commitment to building cities that put people, nature and culture at the heart of progress."

As a prestigious green space within a major city, the Park prompts obvious comparisons with counterparts abroad such as London's Hyde Park and New York's Central Park. Yet, spanning 16.6sqkm, 11sqkm being greenery, it dwarfs those by five and sevenfold, respectively.

The Park is a model of biodiversity, featuring sculpted vertical gardens including an Islamic-referenced garden, meadows, and 1 million trees, altogether painting an idyllic scene of tranquility for citizen and tourist alike. Of the 600 or so plant types, 400 are new to the country. "There's even a Visitor Nursery..." George Tanasijevich explains, where, "...learning about biodiversity and climate responsibility becomes a hands-on, generational experience."

The Park provides a natural habit for diverse flora and fauna, including migrating birds. Aquatic life will flourish in several lakes within a valley of over 800,000sqm. What's more, the Park's vegetation cover could even reduce local temperatures. Overall, the Park depends on sustainable irrigation and water recycling systems that exemplify the KSA's smart-city solutions to the challenging local climate.

Stimulating body and mind, the Park's circular 7.2km pedestrian walkway offers soothing relief from urban stresses. By stimulating outdoor activities in a vast shared space, the Park's recreational areas, playgrounds, a 50,000sqm sports complex and dynamic cultural attractions, activate the Vision's goal of a healthier population. Catering to myriad hobbies, the Park also features the 850,000sqm Royal Golf Course, running and cycling tracks, and an equestrian center, even affording skydiving opportunities. Dining and other retail facilities make for a full-day excursion. Access is purposefully simple for all, with connections to six major roads, five Green Line stations, a Red Line station, and ten Riyadh Bus Service stations.

The KSA is actively integrated into the global artistic scene, showcasing indigenous culture. Within the Park, The Royal Arts Complex designed by the Ministry of Culture and the King Salman Park Foundation stretches over 400,000sqm adding to the city's sizable artistic roster. Sharing space with the 2,500-seat National Theatre is a new museum of world cultures; one of five museums in total.

Ultimately King Salman Park is a pioneering mixed-use scheme encapsulating leisure, hospitality and commerce. As a benchmark for sustainable residential development, it will be home to 96,000 people in 27,000 residential units. The burgeoning MICE sector is accommodated in one of the world's five largest dedicated facilities, plus a 20,000-seat multipurpose events arena. In fact, in addition to the 30,000 workers arriving daily at the Park's office space, around 50 million visitors are forecast each year.

George Tanasijevich explains how, "...we are [...] welcoming partners to co-invest and co-manage select zones—across hospitality, culture, wellness, retail, and more." Notably, he labels these partners long-term collaborators with values, "...that reflect our commitment to sustainability, community benefit, and long-term stewardship [as] co-creators of value, helping us build something lasting and deeply rooted in purpose." One such partner, French hospitality group Accor, together with real estate fund Naif Alrajhi Investment, is introducing Accor's TRIBE lifestyle hotel brand. Aside from the 250-room TRIBE Riyadh King Salman Park, Accor is delivering TRIBE Living Riyadh King Salman Park, comprising 150 serviced apartments that access hotel dining and recreation facilities.

In gifting Riyadh a new set of lungs, King Salman Park is a centerpiece of Vision 2030, playing a transformational role in urban living. As George Tanasijevich concludes, "Ultimately, [it] is a living expression of what it means to grow a city in harmony with its people and its environment." ✖



Image: Andrzej Lisowski Travel



DEVELOPING *AlUla together*

AlUla Development Company is enabling transformation through sustainable partnerships, creating exceptional assets that highlight and celebrate the unique heritage of AlUla.

ALULA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

How do AlUla Development Company's strategic initiatives and investment opportunities align with Saudi Vision 2030 and support economic diversification and sustainable development?

AlUla Development Company is a Public Investment Fund (PIF) company that was established to support the development of AlUla and transform it into a global destination. AlUla Development Company aims to create and manage a world-class portfolio of hospitality, residential, retail, commercial, and real estate assets in collaboration with the private sector and international partners. AlUla's greatest advantage as a destination lies in its existing heritage and 7,000 years of rich history and numerous ancient civilizations. Our primary focus remains on creating exceptional assets that highlight, enhance, and celebrate the unique aspects and heritage of AlUla. This includes selecting the right partners, choosing appropriate materials, and meticulously planning operations to ensure everything aligns with our vision of showcasing and adding value to AlUla. The development plans encompass hotels, villas, contemporary apartments designed in a new low-rise Saudi architectural style, offices, warehouses, secondary infrastructure, retail spaces, and more. These developments are designed to activate underdeveloped sectors and support the Kingdom's non-oil GDP growth.

What key projects is AlUla Development Company currently focusing on?

The concept of partnership is broad, covering every stakeholder and company we engage with. Our approach is flexible, allowing us to customize our investment strategies to ensure the best talent and knowledge are brought to enhance the development of AlUla's projects effectively. Most importantly, we seek partners who share our commitment to sustainable development and the preservation of AlUla's unique cultural heritage. Key stakeholders like PIF, the Royal Commission for AlUla, and others also play a vital role. Our objective is to work cohesively within this ecosystem to drive the project forward positively and effectively. Ultimately, our partnerships are transformational, aimed at delivering long-term impact that benefits the people of AlUla and reinforces Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

What are the main projects AlUla Development Company is currently focusing on?

We are set to open an Autograph Collection hotel by Marriott International in 2027, under the design concept NUMAJ, inspired by Nu Ursae Majoris, a celestial reference rooted in AlUla's historical ties to astronomy. The design is deeply inspired by AlUla's vibrant landscape and vernacular housing, ensuring a culturally rich experience for guests. Architecturally, it will celebrate local textures, stonework, and heritage motifs and aim for LEED Gold sustainability standards. This project is an immersive destination that tells the story of AlUla through design and cosmic symbolism. Additionally, we are working on a major asset aimed at providing staff housing for hospitality employees, located in central AlUla. While our hospitality assets serve as the primary draw, they also create opportunities for entrepreneurs in residential and other sectors. These assets drive and complement each other, enhancing the overall experience for visitors, whether it is heritage or cultural attractions or simply enjoying a fine dining experience or a good cup of coffee. Ultimately, this approach supports a longer visitor stay, which is essential for the long-term success of AlUla as a destination.

What are your main targets for the coming years?

At AlUla Development Company, our primary goal is to build an organization that sets new benchmarks in excellence and impact. We are committed to creating a lasting legacy not only through the destinations and assets we develop but also through the culture and values we cultivate within the company. We believe that empowering young Saudi talent to grow, lead, and shape the future of Saudi Arabia is an essential part of that legacy, one that extends beyond our organization and contributes to the nation's progress. Another key focus for us is developing exceptional places and assets that are both meaningful and economically sustainable. Success, to us, is not measured by the number of assets we deliver but by the strength of the foundation we build and the enduring value we create for our shareholders and for the destination. Through this approach, we aim to contribute to Saudi Arabia's economic diversification and long-term growth. ✖

ALULA
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إحدى شركات الصندوق



Mohammad K. Al-Duraibi
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
OUD REAL ESTATE

BIO

Mohammed K. Al-Duraibi is a Saudi architect and real estate leader with over two decades of experience in luxury development, hospitality, and investment. He holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from King Saud University, an MSc in project management from George Washington University, and a certificate in real estate development & design from Harvard Business School Executive Education. He began his career with Saudi Hotels & Resorts (SHARACO), later joining Rajhi-Invest and DAEM Real Estate. In 2016, Al-Duraibi founded Oud Real Estate. From 2019-2021, he also served as the founding CEO of the Boutique Group under the Public Investment Fund.

With several projects reaching advanced stages, including Oud Reserve, what are your timelines and goals for the next 12 months?

We are progressing rapidly. Oud Reserve is nearly 50% complete and on track for a 1Q2026 opening. This coincides with our 10-year anniversary, and it will serve as a signature statement of what Oud represents today. In the coming year, we will also launch the design and brand identity of our boutique hotel and unveil our first private members' club. Additional developments, including La Perle, will also move into new stages. The next 12 months are about execution and ensuring every material, experience, and service layer reflects the ethos we have developed over the last decade. This will be a defining chapter in our growth.

Looking beyond individual projects, what do you see as Oud's contribution to Vision 2030 and the broader real estate transformation underway in the Kingdom?

Vision 2030 is a call to redefine Saudi Arabia's place in the world, not only economically, but also culturally. At Oud, we believe real estate is one of the most powerful tools to shape how people live, connect, and thrive. We are telling a new story about Saudi Arabia, one of elegance, authenticity, and global sophistication. Our developments serve as physical embodiments of this narrative. We are reinterpreting tradition through contemporary design, offering destinations that are rooted in Saudi identity yet speak fluently to the world. By creating experiences that inspire pride, foster culture, and elevate lifestyle, Oud is helping define what it means to live in the new Saudi Arabia. ✖



Khaled El Khashab
CEO,
DAR BAYAT REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
& INVESTMENT

BIO

Khaled El Khashab, currently the CEO of Dar Bayat Real Estate Development & Investment, is a seasoned real estate professional with over 22 years of experience in business development, sales, commercial strategy and real estate management. El Khashab has worked extensively across the GCC and North Africa, holding leadership roles in companies such as Engineering Consultants Group and Al Akaria. He holds a bachelor of arts in business administration from City University, Washington, and has received further professional training in leadership and critical thinking from Deloitte & Touche.

How has Dar Bayat been evolving within the context of Saudi Arabia's dynamic real estate landscape?

Dar Bayat was founded with a clear vision to elevate the standards of residential development in Saudi Arabia by focusing on quality, livability, and human-centered design. Although the company was officially registered in 2020, our groundwork began in 2019, right before the pandemic, which naturally posed a series of challenges for a nascent business. Despite this, we have since developed and delivered approximately 30 residential projects. Our operational strategy is centered around in-fill development, where we acquire strategic plots in well-established neighborhoods. These communities are already vibrant and connected, allowing us to integrate seamlessly while introducing architectural value and modern functionality. What differentiates Dar Bayat is our boutique approach. We are not mass developers but instead craft properties that embody character, practicality, and a sense of identity, which is often missing in a saturated market.

Looking ahead, what are your strategic priorities and success benchmarks for 2025?

2025 is a pivotal year for us. We aim to complete six major projects and achieve SAR1.2 billion in sales. Additionally, we are pursuing a strategic agreement with NHC to launch an initial batch of 50 residential units. We have also initiated feasibility assessments for a potential entry into the Jeddah market, with our decision expected by 4Q2025. All our targets are designed to balance growth with quality, and to maintain our reputation as a developer that delivers both product excellence and investment value. Success for us is not only about hitting numbers, but leaving a legacy of trust, innovation, and impact. ✖



LEADING *with value perfected*

As Saudi Arabia undergoes one of the world's most ambitious urban transformations, at the forefront is Blacksand, a real estate development company born out of 75-plus years of industrial and entrepreneurial legacy through Alabdullatif Holding Group.

Omar Alabdullatif
CEO,
BLACKSAND

How would you define Blacksand's investment strategy across asset classes?
Our investment strategy is anchored in one principle: quality over quantity. We focus on projects that create meaningful impact, rather than chasing volume. Each development is carefully chosen to address a clear gap in the market while allowing us to deliver with distinction. We operate across hospitality, residential, waterfront coastal living, logistics, land development, and are now expanding into education. In every asset class, the question we ask is the same: does this project advance livability, generate lasting value, and reflect our standard of Value Perfected? A prime example is Town Center in Riyadh's northern corridor. While the area experienced nearly 90% growth in residential developments, only 4% of commercial infrastructure was introduced. We recognized the opportunity to create a high-quality, mixed-use hub that brings retail, dining, wellness, and workplaces to the heart of a growing community serving real needs while ensuring sustainable returns for investors.

How do you ensure your developments go beyond commercial viability to enhance urban livability and quality of life?
For us, true real estate value is measured by the quality of life it brings to people. Every project we undertake is designed to enrich communities and elevate the urban experience. Take Town Center as an example; instead of prioritizing short-term profit, we curated tenants that add real value to the local ecosystem from supermarkets and fitness centers to family entertainment and daily conveniences. This approach ensures our developments are not just commercially viable, but socially meaningful. Our philosophy is clear: we create destinations, not just buildings. While financial performance is important, our legacy and values compel us to take a long view. By delivering projects that foster social, cultural, and functional value, we contribute to Saudi Arabia's broader transformation and ensure our work stands the test of time.

What are some of the flagship developments currently defining Blacksand next chapter?
We are advancing a diverse portfolio that spans millions of square meters across the Kingdom, Blacksand is delivering a new wave of landmark projects across Saudi Arabia, from international-grade masterplans and logistics parks to towers that redefine urban skylines. In Riyadh, our development anchored by a global hospitality brand sets a new standard for vertical living. Beyond the capital, our most ambitious masterplan is set to redefine waterfront coastal living in the region with branded residences, luxury and family resorts, and a dedicated hospitality island establishing a new benchmark for regional urbanism.

Given that logistics is an underserved asset class, how do you approach this vertical?
Logistics is one of the Kingdom's most underserved yet essential asset classes, and we see it as a national development priority. Today, much of the supply in Riyadh and Jeddah consists of outdated stock that does not meet the needs of a modern economy. At the same time, demand for Grade A logistics facilities is accelerating, fueled by the growth of e-commerce and third-party logistics providers. Blacksand is working closely with municipal authorities to design and deliver next-generation logistics parks that are efficient, sustainable, and seamlessly integrated into the urban grid. With occupancy rates for high-quality facilities approaching 100%, the readiness of the market is undeniable. Our goal is to lead this transformation by setting new benchmarks in logistics infrastructure ensuring the sector supports both Saudi Arabia's economic diversification and its urban future. ✖

BIO

The CEO of Blacksand, Omar Alabdullatif leads a development pipeline valued at over SAR25 billion, spanning more than 30 projects across hospitality, mixed-use, residential, logistics, retail, offices, and resorts. Under his leadership, Blacksand is actively shaping masterplans, logistics parks, and landmark towers that redefine Saudi Arabia's urban landscape. With a background in technology and investment, Alabdullatif works across teams and consultants to ensure projects are not only feasible but resilient in execution. He has contributed to the development and delivery planning of major hospitality, residential, commercial, and logistics projects across Saudi Arabia.



Town Centre


Logistics Park


Waterfront Masterplan



The Pursuit of Perfection

We are always pushing ourselves to deliver better. Everyday, we strive for perfection, and never settle for anything less. It means the smallest details are just as important as the big picture. And ultimately it means achieving the highest quality possible at all times; this is our commitment to you.

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EVOLVING *lifestyles*



RAFAL is aligning itself with Vision 2030 by focusing on urban regeneration, leveraging transit-oriented development, strategic partnerships, and innovative housing solutions to create high-density, walkable communities that attract investors and cater to the evolving lifestyles of residents.

Elias Abou Samra
CEO,
RAFAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT CO.

What strategies is RAFAL employing to align with Vision 2030 and address the challenges of urban regeneration in KSA?
RAFAL is aligning with Vision 2030 by focusing on urban regeneration to revitalize underutilized areas like the south of Riyadh. We have restructured to meet new demands and social dynamics and are leveraging transit-oriented development regulations to transform urban spaces. By securing strategic locations around metro and bus stations, we are creating high-density, walkable communities that balance social and urban fabric. Our strategy involves offering competitively priced developments with superior amenities, strategically placed near transit hubs and workplaces to foster connectivity and community.

Can you tell us about your recent partnership with HIVE and its significance?
HIVE is a groundbreaking co-living concept tailored for young professionals, emphasizing flexibility, community, and convenience. We have collaborated closely with authorities and consultants to adapt outdated regulations, like the 80-sqm minimum for one-bedroom units, to better align with modern living standards. Our active involvement in these discussions has helped drive regulatory changes, reflecting a responsive and agile approach to urban regeneration. This partnership positions us at the forefront of the real estate industry, enabling us to quickly advance innovative concepts in a fast-paced environment.

How do you capture the attention of investors in such a competitive market?
We recognize that foreign investors may require a gradual approach to the Saudi market. For this reason, we offer the flexibility of incremental partnerships, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the market dynamics and manage risks as they expand their investments. To capture investor attention in a competitive market, our vision is clear: to be the partner of choice for international investors and developers, aligning with the ambitions of Vision 2030. We have secured key partnerships with regional investors like A.R.M Holding and top family groups like Kanoo Group, demonstrating our appeal and credibility. Our commitment to transparency and prioritizing investor interests led to a SAR3-billion joint venture with CITIC, China's largest conglomerate, and the National Housing Company. This project balances our built-to-rent and built-to-sell strategies, ensuring value creation and market stability.

How is your target in term of residents evolving?
Our target demographic is evolving as we adapt to evolving lifestyles in Saudi Arabia. While we still serve young Saudi families and single Saudis, we now focus on those embracing a more international lifestyle and marrying later. Many Saudis in their mid-30s, who are not eligible for government subsidies, prefer to invest in modern properties before eventually moving to villas. Additionally, resident expatriates are increasingly considering home ownership in Riyadh, anticipating the introduction of freehold ownership. Our projects are designed to meet the needs of both these groups, offering modern, flexible living spaces that align with their evolving lifestyles. ✖

BIO

Elias Abou Samra is a seasoned real estate executive with over 15 years of experience in mixed-use projects and urban regeneration. Since becoming CEO of Rafal Real Estate Development Company in 2021, he has led the transformation of Saudi's leading private developer to support Vision 2030's PPP initiatives. He has also played key roles in restructuring major projects such as the Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh and the King Abdullah Financial District, as well as advising on megaprojects under Vision 2030. His background includes experience in investment banking and private equity, with a degree in finance and economics from the American University of Beirut.

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إرث
ERTH

Erth

contributes to shaping the future of urban living in the Kingdom.

With an ambitious vision to elevate living standards and build a sustainable urban future for communities.



Erth.sa

MONUMENTAL *transformation*



Erth has been instrumental in the development of Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector, delivering architectural creations that reflect the country's heritage and commitment to excellence.

Saud Abdullah Al-Rajhi
CEO & MANAGING DIRECTOR,
ERTH

Can you elaborate on Erth's vision for Saudi Arabia's urban regeneration and how it will align with Vision 2030?
At Erth, our vision is deeply intertwined with that of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, particularly in the realm of urban regeneration. Our projects are built on a foundation of quality, which aligns seamlessly with Vision 2030's emphasis on enhancing the quality of life. We are committed to delivering this elevated standard of living to our residents and visitors by leveraging cutting-edge innovations, technologies, and sustainable solutions that are at the forefront of the market. Our approach is distinctly local-centric. We prioritize collaboration with local and pioneer designers, merging traditional Saudi design elements with modern innovations to create unique, culturally resonant spaces. Our ultimate goal is to contribute significantly to the vision by providing services that enhance the quality of life in Saudi Arabia, adhering to the highest international standards. Moreover, Erth has been instrumental in the development of Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector, delivering real estate solutions that resonate with the Kingdom's vision of creating architectural masterpieces that reflect our community's uniqueness and originality. Our vision of becoming a preferred real estate brand in Saudi Arabia is fully aligned with leading first-class projects that not only meet market expectations but also unlock the economic potential of the Kingdom.

How does Erth's approach to real estate development differentiate from other developers in the Kingdom?
Erth operates in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving environment, where customer satisfaction is paramount. One of our key differentiators is our project-flexible management approach, which allows us to adapt and innovate without compromising on timelines. We continually monitor market developments, integrating the latest design trends and innovations into our projects. This agility ensures that we not only keep pace with change but also turn it to our advantage, delivering projects that are ahead of the curve.

What is the structure of your portfolio currently, and which segments are driving the company's growth?
Our portfolio is diverse, yet heavily weighted toward hospitality, reflecting our belief in Saudi Arabia's burgeoning tourism sector. We currently have approximately 1,200 keys in development across key cities like Mecca, Jeddah, and Riyadh. With the Kingdom surpassing its Vision 2030 target of 100 million tourists, now extended to 150 million, we see immense opportunities in hospitality, which is a critical component of all our mixed-use developments. Our office segment is another area of significant growth. We are expanding our leasable office space from an existing 60,000sqm to 150,000sqm, underscoring our commitment to supporting the Kingdom's business ecosystem.

Mecca is undergoing a transformation in hospitality and religious tourism that will redefine the city by 2030. How is Erth contributing to this transformation?
Erth is proud to be part of the monumental transformation underway in Mecca, particularly through our project in the Masar urban destination. This development includes three towers, featuring 505 hotel keys, 500 residential apartments, and retail spaces, all strategically located just 800m from the Holy Mosque. Masar, one of the most significant gigaprojects in Mecca, offers outstanding infrastructure and a prime location. Our aim is to enhance the experience of visitors to Mecca by providing them with something truly unique.

What are your key objectives for 2025?
Our objectives for 2025 are ambitious yet achievable. We plan to complete and hand over three projects, one of which is our flagship Raffles Jeddah project. Additionally, we are moving forward with the Marina Project in the Eastern Province, a 3.3 million-sqm development that will include a 300,000-sqm lagoon, a 40-m tall dancing fountain, a bridge over the lagoon, and a 4-km walkway around the lagoon and surrounded by towers. The infrastructure is already in place, and we are now focused on developing the superstructure, which we believe will set a new standard of living in the region and deliver on our existing commitments, ensuring that Erth remains at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's real estate and urban regeneration sectors. ✖

BIO

Saud Abdullah Al-Rajhi, a seasoned leader in Saudi property development, drives Erth's mission to redefine urban landscapes aligned with Vision 2030. With a focus on sustainable, world-class projects, he brings expertise from diversified roles including chairman of the National Association of the Blind, vice chairman of Al Rajhi Takaful, and chairman and co-founder of SEMARK, a leading events and management company. His leadership at Erth is defined by quality, innovation, and a commitment to enhancing community impact.



Mohammed Al-Mujaidel
CEO,
OSUS

What are the biggest challenges facing the real estate sector in Saudi Arabia today, and how is OSUS positioned to navigate these challenges effectively?

The sector faces significant challenges, such as balancing rapid urbanization with sustainable development and addressing the mismatch between supply and demand. Additionally, integrating global standards of quality and sustainability into local projects remains a challenge. OSUS approaches these challenges by leveraging data-driven market studies conducted with international firms like JLL and Knight Frank. These insights guide our strategic decisions and ensure that our projects meet market needs while adhering to sustainability principles. Our commitment to Vision 2030 allows us to stay agile and innovative, enabling us to overcome obstacles and capitalize on opportunities.

How does OSUS contribute to Riyadh's urban transformative projects, and what unique value does it bring to the capital's development?

Community well-being is at the heart of everything we do. We design projects that provide a full spectrum of amenities, from green spaces and recreational facilities to commercial hubs and residential units. For example, our mixed-use developments adhere to the "five-minute walk" principle, ensuring residents have easy access to essential services. We also incorporate sustainability measures, such as outdoor air-cooling systems, recycling initiatives, and energy-efficient designs. These features ensure that our projects meet the diverse needs of residents while enhancing their quality of life. Our developments, such as the OSUS Green Tower, reflect our commitment to sustainability, modernization, and enhancing the quality of life in the capital. We aim to complement Riyadh's urban regeneration by creating spaces that harmoniously blend tradition with modernity. The Green Tower, for example, incorporates Salmani architectural principles, integrates energy-efficient facades, and is surrounded by green landscapes. Designed by the globally renowned firm Benoy, the project merges Riyadh's cultural heritage with modern architectural innovations. The building features advanced facades that mitigate the impact of harsh sunlight, reducing energy consumption while creating a comfortable indoor environment. Additionally, the surrounding green spaces foster a sense of community and well-being. The Green Tower exemplifies how we integrate design, sustainability, and functionality, aligning with Riyadh's broader ambitions under Vision 2030. Riyadh's transformation presents immense opportunities, and OSUS is proud to contribute to these efforts. ✖

BIO

Mohammed Al-Mujaidel is CEO of OSUS. Graduating with a PhD in educational administration from King Saud University in 2012, he boasts over two decades of extensive leadership and managerial experience. His journey includes the establishment of both commercial enterprises and non-profit entities. Proficient in designing strategic and operational blueprints, crafting performance metrics, refining organizational frameworks, and shaping governance protocols, he is also adept at enhancing procedures and business models. His exceptional aptitude garnered the attention of OSUS, paving the way for his recruitment in 2022.



Image: Ayman Zaid

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EASY *living*

Solana Holding has shifted to lifestyle management through its subsidiaries, focusing on tenant engagement and adapting to technological changes in real estate.

Jamil Al-Saleh
FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN,
SOLANA HOLDING

Can you introduce Solana Holding and its operations?
Solana Holding has strategically transitioned from traditional property management to comprehensive lifestyle management, positioning itself as a leader in the industry. Solana's ecosystem, housed under Solana Holdings, operates through three main subsidiaries, each dedicated to delivering exceptional service. Solana Living focuses on property management services, including maintenance and facility management, and provides tenants with a virtual neighborhood app offering hundreds of lifestyle experiences across various properties in Riyadh. Solana Leasing facilitates all leasing activities such as property listing, tenant screening, and rent collection. It features a leasing site showcasing Solana properties and select third-party properties that meet Solana Living's high standards. Solana Development, meanwhile, oversees contracting activities, ensuring that every property adheres to the Solana standard of living through building refurbishment, repairs, and environmental design. By transitioning from traditional property management to lifestyle management, Solana has created a virtual community where tenants can connect and engage with each other as neighbors. Through a shared platform, the Solana community fosters a sense of belonging and facilitates meaningful interactions among its members, enhancing the overall living experience.

With many companies now claiming to provide lifestyle management services, how does your brand differentiate itself and establish leadership in this space?
Many companies include lifestyle management in their slogans, though few truly deliver on it. Outside of well-known compounds, which are stunningly beautiful, the quality of lifestyle management heavily depends on the asset's management. From personal experience, many companies still fall short in truly providing lifestyle management outside of a few elite compounds. Our goal is to set a new standard in the industry, aiming to have multiple properties that exemplify our commitment to lifestyle management. We have experimented with different approaches for executive living across our compounds like Orient, Donia Suites, and the Eastern Village. Each has a unique grading system to cater to specific demographics. Our competitive advantage lies in our market presence and understanding of the local demographics. We carefully screen tenant applications to maintain the right mix, although challenges persist. Our approach ensures that we achieve the right tenant mix and manage interactions between residents. In summary, while lifestyle management is a popular claim, our experience, market presence, and tailored approaches to different demographics set us apart. We are committed to truly delivering on the promise of lifestyle management, creating environments where residents' needs are met, and community harmony is maintained.

How does Solana plan to address the challenges posed by the rapid pace of technological change in the real estate industry?
In the past, starting a business required extensive networking and learning from others, often through the chamber of commerce. Today, everything is at one's fingertips. Our concern is whether we can keep up with the speed of these changes. While real estate remains a traditional business model focused on selling or leasing properties, the emergence of new technologies and business models has introduced unprecedented changes, and the challenge lies in understanding how these developments will impact us. For example, will we need to create parking spots for drones in the future? This is a significant concern because, at the end of the day, we are still dealing with physical structures, namely homes built with bricks and mortar. The pace of change in other industries is rapid, though I do not expect the real estate sector to experience the same pace of transformation. The primary changes will likely occur in design. However, we face significant operational challenges, such as maintaining security, managing maintenance, and ensuring cleanliness. These tasks involve human interactions, and while we can incorporate AI, there are limits to its applicability. Managing these operational aspects remains a major priority for our business. ✖

BIO

Jamil Al-Saleh started his career in the financial and investment banking sectors. Through his life, he has worked with ultra-high net worth family offices to build and manage their assets regionally and internationally. From 2018-2020, he served as director of property management and head of residential in one of PIF's gigaprojects in King Abdullah Financial District. In 2021, Al-Saleh successfully launched Solana Holding, a real estate development, investment, and property management company with a focus on lifestyle management and a leasing company.

SOLANA
HOLDING

From Real Estate Development to Lifestyle Management

Welcome to the Solana Difference

Solana Holding is a premier real estate company dedicated to transforming the landscape of modern living through innovative property development, comprehensive property lifestyle management, and flexible leasing solutions. With a steadfast commitment to excellence, Solana Holding aims to create vibrant communities and sustainable environments that cater to the evolving needs of our residents.

20	1,200	95%
Properties Under Management	Number of Keys	Leased Units

Design & Build

Our properties have a customized look and feel. This further enhances the living experience for our residents.

Lifestyle Experience

We aim to provide the best level of services and exceptional customer service.

Landlord Solutions

Our partners get personalized solutions for every need along with easy-to-use technology tools.

Community App

An app designed to engage our community and gives them access to all essential services.

Where We Belong.



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LIVING *well*

Delos offers innovations in wellness design to create healthier homes including air purification, water filtration, and dynamic lighting. In Saudi Arabia, more than 27-million sqft are registered WELL spaces.

Shannon M. Dunn
CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT,
DELOS ARABIA

How does Delos position itself at the intersection of real estate development and public health?
We see buildings as one of the most scalable solutions to today's public health challenges. Since people spend most of their lives indoors at home, work, or school, these environments are where we can make the greatest impact. Delos, our US-based parent company, operates across three strategic pillars, the most recognized being the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), which administers the WELL Building Standard. WELL is the health-first complement to LEED, with the two systems formally linked through the LEED–WELL Crosswalk. Many leading projects now pursue dual Platinum certification, combining environmental sustainability with human well-being at the highest level. In Saudi Arabia, more than 27-million sqft are registered, including projects such as the Misk Foundation Centre, Misk Schools, NEOM Magna hotels, and King Salman International Airport. WELL is adaptable to any building type, from homes and schools to hospitals and even industrial facilities, and our mission is to reimagine the built environment so that every space actively supports human health and well-being.

What opportunities do you see for WELL adoption in Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector?
While only a few hotels globally are WELL-certified, we see tremendous opportunity here. WELL is not about adding a gym or a spa but embedding science-backed health and well-being into every aspect of the guest experience. Through performance verification, WELL ensures that hotels maintain high standards of air, water, lighting, and overall environmental quality so the property continues to feel fresh and rejuvenating throughout its lifespan. At the same time, international travelers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. They know what healthy buildings can provide, and they are starting to expect more immersive environments that support their well-being. For developers, this goes beyond hospitality; it is also a strategy for risk mitigation, ESG compliance, and future-proofing investments. NEOM Magna is already part of our WELL at Scale program, which enables organizations to implement WELL strategies consistently across multiple properties and demonstrate measurable health, well-being, and sustainability outcomes at the portfolio level.

What are your most important milestones and KPIs, and how will you measure the success of Delos Arabia's mission in the region?
One of our most important milestones is education and awareness, namely embedding the principles of health and well-being into every level of society, beginning with youth. We envision teaching children about environmental and human sustainability in schools that are optimized not only for the health of the planet, but also for their own personal health. At the same time, we aim to elevate the way buildings are designed, maintained, and operated to a higher standard, one that puts health at the core and engages both medical professionals and educators in shaping the spaces where we live, learn, and work. For our local team, success means making all buildings, new and existing, healthy spaces, so that the youngest generation in Saudi Arabia can live their entire lives in environments that actively support their well-being. That will be a remarkable achievement, and one we intend to measure, study, and continually refine. With the Kingdom's scale of construction and its strong commitment to people-first places, we have an unprecedented opportunity to deploy WELL across entire communities and cities, using it as a foundation for population-scale research. WELL was designed to scale, and here in Saudi Arabia, we have the chance to unlock its full potential, showing the world how the intersection of building science and human health science can transform both quality of life and health span. ✖

BIO

Shannon M. Dunn is an architect, co-founder, and president of Delos Arabia, and an internationally recognized leader in wellness and healthy building innovation. A founding team member of Delos, pioneer of the WELL Building Standard, she helped shape the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) and the Well Living Lab. Now based in Riyadh, Dunn represents IWBI in Saudi Arabia, advancing people-first building strategies across the Kingdom and the wider Middle East.

BUILDING *the Saudi dream*

Saudi Arabia's construction and real estate sectors are playing a central role in shaping the nation's economic and social transformation. From new urban centers to revitalized heritage districts, development across the Kingdom reflects a careful balance between progress and preservation. Vision 2030 has set the stage for large-scale infrastructure projects, sustainable housing, and smart city initiatives that meet the needs of a growing and increasingly urban population. Supported by public-private partnerships and strong investor confidence, the sector is creating spaces that embody the Kingdom's evolving modern, connected, and community-focused identity. As new skylines rise and historic sites are restored, Saudi Arabia is building more than physical structures; it is laying the foundations for a new way of living and working in the decades ahead. ✖



BUILDING UP *momentum*

BUNA is a leading Saudi general contractor, known for building high-quality, transformative projects including mixed-use and high-rise buildings.

Eslam Radwan
CO-FOUNDER & CEO,
BUNA

How is the Saudi construction industry evolving, and what opportunities does it offer as the country undergoes a transformative phase?
In general, the Saudi market and the overall economy are in a transformative phase. Saudi Arabia remains an emerging economy, and construction is the backbone of building the country's infrastructure, capabilities, and future economic pillars. The construction market can be split into two sectors. First, there are the "ambitious projects," which include the giga projects happening across the Kingdom, such as NEOM and the Red Sea developments. Second, there is the essential sector, which focuses on infrastructure, housing, hospitality, and developments supporting population growth, particularly in Mecca, Medina, and areas serving the oil and gas industries. For companies such as ours, sustainability lies in this second sector, as it aligns with long-term national needs.

What untapped potential do Mecca and Medina hold for BUNA, and how are you contributing to their transformation?
The potential in Mecca and Medina is enormous. From a religious perspective, there are 1.3 billion Muslims globally, all keen to visit these holy cities. Reaching 100 million visitors annually is feasible, especially compared to global tourism hubs like Dubai, which celebrates 34 million, or Paris at 38 million; however, the current infrastructure in Mecca and Medina requires extra effort and further development to accommodate that scale. This is where the opportunity lies: to invest, construct, and develop projects that increase capacity and improve quality of life. Our focus in Mecca and Medina is on creating unique developments. In Medina, for example, we are working on a landmark project: a 126,000sqm built-up area within the central zone. Unlike other developers who maximize mass hotels, we are addressing key gaps. Medina lacks mixed-use developments, fine dining, quality retail, serviced apartments, business centers, and family-friendly spaces. Our project includes a five-star hotel offering studios to three-bedroom units, duplexes, and premium hospitality experiences. We also include 20,000sqm of retail, 6,000sqm of dine-in restaurants, open plazas with activities, and support services like drivers' housing, children-friendly areas, and business centers. We ensured our design integrates well into the area, avoiding massive, unsightly structures. Only 30% of the floor plan is utilized for construction, leaving ample open spaces and outdoor areas. This development is already 45% complete and will be delivered by the end of 2026.

What are the company's primary objectives and strategic goals for the year ahead?
We have three primary goals. First, we aim to achieve SAR1.5-billion in revenue over the next few years. Second, we plan for 30-40% of our revenue to come from PPPs and build operate transfer (BOT) projects. Third, we want to the leader in specialized developments, particularly in mixed-use and infrastructure sectors, where we see a clear market gap. These goals align with our mission to deliver projects on time, within budget, and to the highest standards. Our competitive advantage remains our ability to manage the entire lifecycle of a project, from design to delivery, while ensuring rational cost structures.

How does your work contribute to Saudi Arabia's quality of life agenda, and what broader impact do you envision?
We are proud to contribute to improving quality of life in the Kingdom. Our projects in Mecca and Medina, urban regeneration initiatives, and stadium developments are more than structures; they are enablers of business opportunities, community development, and economic growth. By creating sustainable, mixed-use environments, we provide spaces that cater to families, businesses, and tourists alike. Our role is to deliver transformative projects that align with Vision 2030's objectives while setting new benchmarks for execution and quality in Saudi Arabia's construction industry. We are committed to building the Kingdom's future while driving investor confidence and market growth. ✖

BIO

As Co-founder & CEO of BUNA, one of the region's leading general contractors, Eslam Radwan brings over 12 years of experience in managing construction companies and delivering successful EPC projects. With a robust technical, financial, and legal background, he holds both an MBA and a civil engineering degree. He has a proven track record of managing distressed, fast-track, sophisticated, and multi-disciplinary projects across vast geographical areas. Committed to advancing the organization, he leads its digital transformation journey while adopting the latest construction technologies to enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

BUNA
HOLDING

BUILD TO LAST

A Vision for Integrated Excellence

Buna Holding was established to meet precisely this challenge. Guided by the vision of “establishing new benchmarks as the region’s most trusted publicly listed builder”, Buna unites specialized subsidiaries throughout the entire construction lifecycle, from infrastructure and superstructure to MEP, facility management, consultancy, and real estate development and the mission is about, “empowering projects with integrated expertise, local excellence, and innovation”, underscores its role as a national enabler of growth.









Innovation, Sustainability, and Future Growth

Beyond its current portfolio, Buna Holding is actively investing in future-oriented sectors, including BIM modeling, industrial laser scanning, advanced flooring solutions, fire protection systems, and sustainable heavy-lifting technologies. These innovations not only reduce project risk and environmental footprint but also keep Buna competitive in an industry that is rapidly evolving.







www.bunaholding.com info@bunaholding.com +966 12 658 8868



Image: M. Sadoon



BUILDING *big*

As the largest construction company in the Middle East, CCC is renowned for its capability to deliver iconic megaprojects.

Hisham Kawash
REGIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CONSOLIDATED CONTRACTORS COMPANY (CCC)

With CCC's strong legacy in Saudi Arabia, how do you see the company's role evolving in the Kingdom's construction landscape over the next decade?
CCC has been a pillar of Saudi Arabia's development, executing critical infrastructure and energy projects for decades. As Vision 2030 reshapes the national economy, CCC is strategically positioning itself to lead in gigaprojects, infrastructure expansion, and energy transformation. Our focus is on integrating digitalization, optimizing project management efficiencies, and reinforcing local talent development through Saudization initiatives. By leveraging global expertise while embedding ourselves deeply in the local market, CCC is ensuring its long-term impact on the Kingdom's ambitious transformation. Additionally, we are adapting to the latest industry shifts, including the increased emphasis on ESG principles, which will play a crucial role in securing future contracts and enhancing CCC's sustainability agenda.

Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in gigaprojects and infrastructure. What role does CCC play in these initiatives, and which major projects are currently in the pipeline?
CCC is at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's gigaproject revolution, actively contributing to the realization of NEOM, AlUla, and large-scale energy infrastructure ventures. With decades of expertise in engineering, procurement, and construction, we are strategically positioned to shape the Kingdom's next-generation infrastructure. Upcoming project launches will further consolidate CCC's role as a trusted leader in the construction sector, driving innovation and sustainable development. In addition to major urban projects, CCC also plays a pivotal role in developing key logistics and transportation hubs that are critical to Saudi Arabia's long-term economic diversification strategy.

Saudi Arabia's construction sector is increasingly attracting international players. What opportunities do you see for foreign companies to collaborate with CCC?
The rapid expansion of Saudi Arabia's construction landscape presents immense collaboration opportunities for international firms. CCC is keen on partnering with global leaders in digital construction, advanced engineering solutions, and sustainable materials. Areas such as modular construction, smart infrastructure, and renewable energy developments present strong potential for synergistic alliances that drive mutual value creation. With the rise of PPP models and increased FDI in infrastructure projects, CCC is actively seeking knowledge-sharing partnerships that enhance technological integration and operational efficiency.

What factors should international firms consider when entering the Saudi market, and how can they successfully integrate into the local construction ecosystem?
Foreign companies must prioritize a deep understanding of local regulations, compliance with Saudization policies, and alignment with Vision 2030's objectives. Establishing long-term partnerships with reputable local firms such as CCC, fostering adaptability to regional business culture, and demonstrating a commitment to local workforce development are crucial for sustained success in the Saudi construction sector. Moreover, international firms need to be agile in navigating evolving regulatory landscapes, particularly in areas related to sustainability mandates and digital construction frameworks.

How does CCC plan to further expand its presence in Saudi Arabia beyond its current portfolio of projects?
CCC is diversifying into smart infrastructure and next-generation energy solutions, with upcoming project launches solidifying our role as a transformational force in Saudi Arabia's evolving construction landscape. By continuously innovating and adapting to market demands, we are ensuring our legacy of excellence endures well into the future. Our strategic roadmap includes strengthening our foothold in the digital construction ecosystem while exploring new opportunities in high-tech manufacturing hubs and advanced logistics infrastructure. ✖

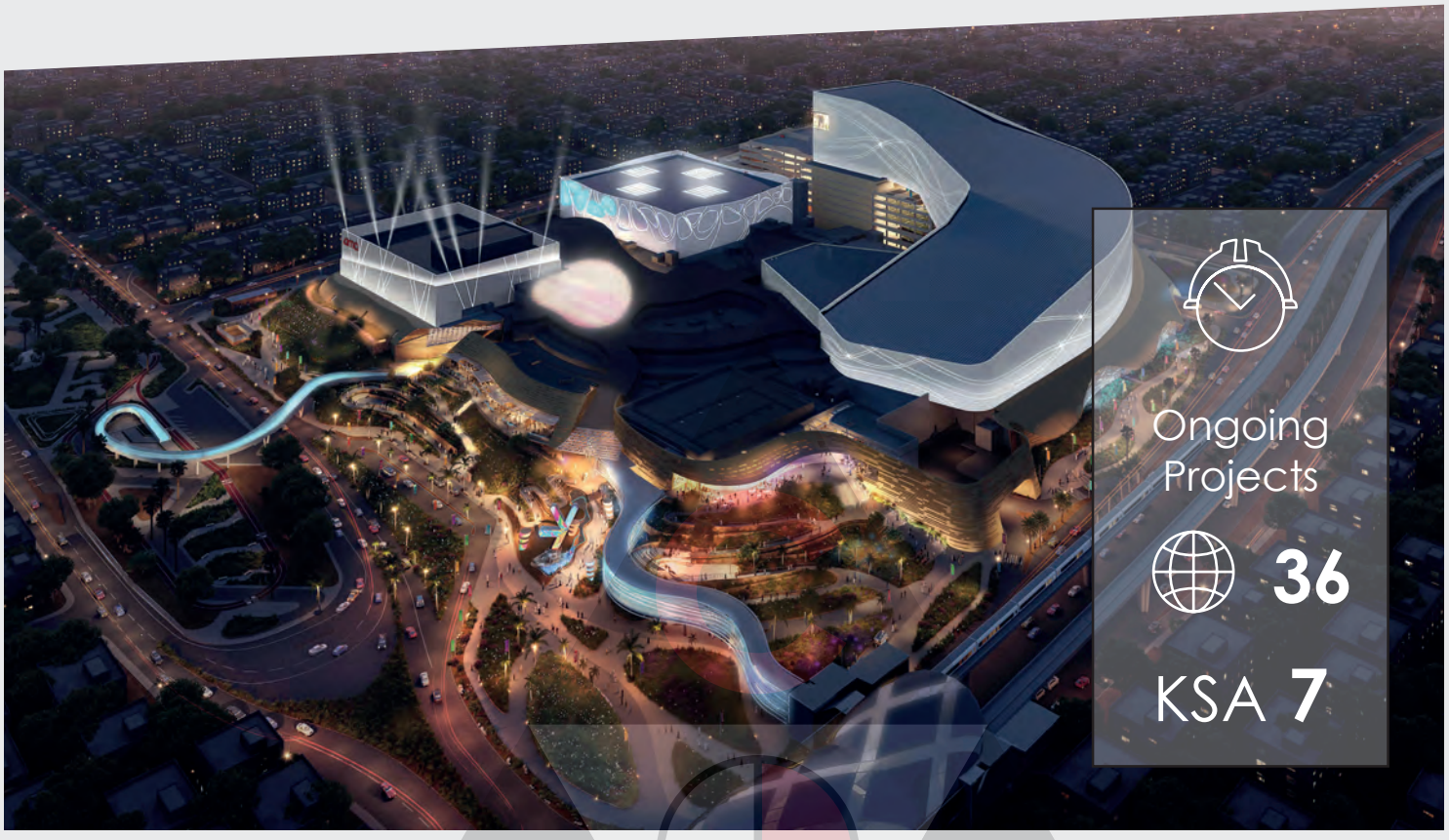
BIO

Hisham Kawash is a strategic leader and global industry influencer with over 35 years of experience driving multi-billion-dollar ventures across various sectors. With a background in mechanical engineering, Kawash has been instrumental in strategic mega-project execution, corporate restructuring, and market expansion, reinforcing CCC's position as a global leader in large-scale construction and energy projects. His expertise spans financial oversight, operational governance, stakeholder engagement, and risk mitigation, consistently delivering impactful results in complex markets. Throughout his career, Kawash has successfully led CCC's regional and international operations, driving major developments in Kazakhstan, Greece, Oman, UAE, Australia, and Papua New Guinea.

Consolidated Contractors Company

Transforming Saudi Arabia's Infrastructure




Ongoing
Projects
36
KSA 7


Employees
Worldwide
47,000
KSA 12,500
Completed
Projects (US$)
300 B
KSA 30.9 B

MADE *right here*

From educating a future-proofed workforce to supporting innovation in strategic sectors, the KSA is bolstering the domestic economy and raising its global competitiveness by honing its inner strengths, and local content the name of the game.

THE MADE IN SAUDI INITIATIVE, dating back to March 2021, embodies the fundamental 'Saudization' objective of Vision 2030. It supports import substitution, and helps establish a local skill base and quality employment, all while building sustainable local supply chains for the Kingdom's Giga Projects and regular commerce. The program, which is a National Industrial Development and Logistics Program (NIDLP) initiative led by the Saudi Export Development Authority (Saudi Exports), is also a catalyst of domestic production capacities and a champion of local competitiveness in the global arena. The NIDLP chases 2030 goals across target sectors. These include localizing the pharmaceutical industry by 40%, domestic food production by 85% and overall defense and security expenditure by 50%.

The Made in Saudi stamp is emblematic of quality, authenticity, sustainability, and innovation. As far a participating companies goes, program eligibility is determined in two categories. The first is wholly-obtained products sourced in the KSA. The second is products obtained through substantial local transformation of imported materials with a minimum 40% value-added ratio. According to the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources, the value of projects under Saudi Arabia's local content initiatives had scaled USD213 billion by 3Q2024. In government projects the local content ratio had soared from 33% in 2020 to around 47% by end-3Q2024. The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing added that the local manufacturing of home construction technologies had reached 70%.

Meanwhile, the Made in Saudi Program has positive implications for global brands, predominantly access to the Kingdom's economic transformation. Strategic partnerships bearing the initiative's stamp of approval enjoy access to local expertise, curbing operational risk. Firms receive state initiatives such as streamlined regulatory processes, tax breaks and subsidies where production plants are established locally. Participation in the initiative also boosts local brand reputation.

A hallmark of Vision 2030 is its giga-projects and the comprehensive schemes of long-term industrial, commercial and social significance. These schemes, too, support localization, as exemplified by the Yanbu 4 independent water project (IWP), on the Red Sea coast close to the industrial city of Yanbu. Local content numbers from the outset were set at 40% during construction, rising to 50% in the first five years of operation, and then reaching 70% from year six onwards.

The uninterrupted flow of goods and commodities fuels diversified industrial growth and technological innovation. Realizing Vision 2030 requires supply chain and logistics capabilities resilient to external disruption, be it geo-political or, like COVID-19, natural in nature. Initiatives that bring state and private sector together to achieve. For one, the creation of the National Unified Procurement Company (NUPCO), a centralized procurement body for the public healthcare sector, supports supply chain resilience. The KSA has resolved to allocate over 50% of FDI to develop local supply chains. Recall that the Kingdom aims for foreign investment to scale 5.7% of the total economy, with a market worth exceeding USD1.6 trillion by 2030, which makes for almost USD1.0 billion in investment.

In another localizing initiative, global Behemoth Saudi Aramco has led the In-Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA) program to boost industrial capacity and a skilled workforce. This program has garnered over 460 investments with capital expenditure of approximately USD7 billion, of which around USD100 billion has entered the Saudi economy. Young Saudis enter quality employment as suppliers have increased Saudization-related spending by 60% since 2015. Elsewhere, almost half of tech giant Honeywell's local workforce comprises Saudi nationals, while its graduate engineering program has increased female hires by 50%.

The local Content & Government Procurement Authority LCGPA launched in 2018, drafts policies and regulations pertaining to national purchasing power. At a panel in 2024 entitled Future Directions of Local Content in the Context of Saudi Vision 2030, the authority revealed adding 1,100 new products from local industry to the mandatory purchase list. Furthemore, the number of factories supplying the mandatory list had risen by 1,437 to roughly 6,100 by 3Q2024. Revealingly, the 8% rise outperformed the 5% growth rate for all factories in the KSA. Over 42,000 new jobs had been created as a result in the previous three years.

The Made in Saudi scheme, then, future-proofs the Kingdom's workforce and industrial matrix, while appealing to international investment keen on a slice of the KSA's phenomenal economic adventure. ✖



Mohamed Khalil
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MIDDLE EAST, ALSTOM



Belal Deiranieh
CEO,
SYSTRA

METRO

Saudi Arabia's economic overhaul is bringing new modes of connectivity throughout its vast territory.

How does your affiliation with the European Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia (ECCKSA) support your strategic objectives in the Kingdom?

MOHAMED KHALIL Alstom operates at the intersection of innovation, mobility, and sustainable infrastructure, with a presence spanning over 200 manufacturing sites worldwide. While our origins are French, our business model is fundamentally European, making our engagement with ECCKSA both strategic and natural. ECCKSA provides an invaluable platform for regulatory insights, networking, and fostering cross-border collaborations, which are essential for successfully navigating this rapidly evolving market. With the Kingdom undertaking one of the world's most ambitious economic transformations under Vision 2030, the transportation sector has become a focal point for investment. Our partnership with ECCKSA enhances our ability to proactively engage with decision-makers, align with regulatory frameworks, and position Alstom as a key enabler of Saudi Arabia's smart and sustainable mobility future.

BELAL DEIRANIEH Although ECCKSA is still in its early stages, our involvement already signals a strategic alignment with the broader European business community active in the Kingdom. ECCKSA provides a long-overdue institutional platform that unifies and amplifies European presence in the local market. Historically, our engagements were largely channeled through the French Embassy, limiting our reach to predominantly French suppliers and networks. Now, with ECCKSA's pan-European framework, we can collectively engage with other European counterparts. One significant milestone was hosting a mobility roundtable at our Riyadh headquarters, which brought together major players across various verticals, namely rail, aerospace, automotive, and infrastructure. It was not just about exchanging views, but about exploring real joint ventures and aligning on Saudi Arabia's rapidly evolving regulatory and investment environment. For a European engineering powerhouse like SYSTRA, the chamber's activities help us reinforce our footprint, deepen collaboration, and better support the Kingdom's transformation with European know-how and standards.

What factors make the Kingdom such a pivotal market for your global operations?

KM Alstom's footprint in Saudi Arabia extends over seven decades, reflecting a deep-rooted commitment to the region's development. Today, the Kingdom stands at the forefront of global mobility innovation, with unparalleled investments in railway networks, urban transit, and high-speed transportation. The sheer scale of Saudi Arabia's infrastructure projects, combined with its strategic geographic position as a logistics and trade hub, makes it an essential market for our long-term growth. The country's ambitious railway expansion, including high-speed corridors, metro systems, and freight rail, aligns perfectly with Alstom's expertise in delivering end-to-end mobility solutions. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's vast landmass and population growth necessitate resilient, high-capacity transport systems, and Alstom is uniquely positioned to contribute through advanced engineering, sustainable technologies, and digital transformation initiatives. Our involvement in the Riyadh Metro is one of the most transformative projects in Alstom's global portfolio. As the world's largest single-phase metro development, the Riyadh Metro network spans six lines and 85 stations, fundamentally redefining urban mobility in the capital. Alstom has supplied 69 Metropolis metro trains, incorporating cutting-edge Urbalis CBTC signaling technology to optimize operational efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Additionally, our HESOP regenerative braking system minimizes power usage, reinforcing the project's alignment with Saudi Arabia's sustainability objectives.

BD The shift toward integrated public transportation across Saudi Arabia is not only a logistical necessity, but a core pillar of Vision 2030. The launch of the Riyadh Metro is a powerful catalyst. It has marked a shift in public behavior, generating ridership figures of around 300,000 per day in its early stages. What is particularly telling is the high uptake among Saudi nationals, reflecting a growing openness to using mass transit. This behavioral shift is crucial for any mobility transition to succeed. At SYSTRA, we are deeply embedded in this national movement. Our operational presence spans key cities, including Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina, AlUla, and NEOM. In Riyadh, we have been project managers and design leads across several metro lines for over a decade. In Mecca and Medina, our focus is on intermodal systems and last-mile connectivity. In NEOM, we are involved in next-generation mobility planning. Importantly, our leadership extends beyond city-level engagements. In AlUla, we designed the tramway system that will connect archaeological and cultural sites using a fully integrated network. Alstom is supplying the trains, and the system has been tailored to the site's heritage context. We have also conducted feasibility studies for connections between GCC countries. These efforts are paving the way for regional integration, and we expect these G2G projects to gather momentum in the coming years. ✖



Abdulrahman al Zahrani
SAUDI ARABIA COUNTRY GENERAL MANAGER, NAQEL EXPRESS

BIO

Abdulrahman Al Zahrani is a distinguished executive with a proven track record of over a decade in managing business and driving strategic growth within the logistics and express delivery sector. He has held several key positions at NAQEL Express. He was instrumental in running NAQEL business, which helped set NAQEL among the best performing Express delivery partners recognized by major players and regulators during those years. He holds a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from King Saud University.

How are you adapting to the unique demands of tourism-led logistics, particularly for remote or high-end destinations?

Our collaboration with Red Sea Global to support logistics for luxury tourism and giga-events goes beyond conventional delivery, requiring a specialized approach to serve remote, off-grid luxury destinations. We deploy a diversified fleet capable of handling unique terrains while integrating biofuel and electric vehicles to align with RSG's regenerative tourism commitments. We provide end-to-end solutions with localized expertise, establishing on-site logistics hubs supported by dedicated teams and real-time, data-driven supply chain technologies. This approach ensures operational excellence and supports the Kingdom's strategy to develop world-class tourism assets sustainably.

What strategies are you implementing to nurture local talent and leadership within NAQEL Express?

Our people are our greatest asset, and building strong local leadership is a strategic imperative. The core of our approach lies in targeted talent development, fostering innovation, and aligning growth with the Kingdom's national strategy. Through our flagship Future Leaders program, high-potential individuals undergo multi-year rotations across operations, customs, and technology, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the logistics chain. We complement this with continuous skill-based training in areas like cold-chain logistics and high-value project handling. Exposure to senior leadership and cross-functional collaboration further instills problem-solving and strategic thinking. Our talent strategy aligns with Vision 2030 by prioritizing localization, ensuring leadership deeply understands local market dynamics. Beyond strengthening NAQEL, this approach contributes to Saudi Arabia's ambition of becoming a global logistics hub, developing professionals who drive transformative projects and regional economic diversification. ✖



Yaser A. Al-Malhan
CEO, LSC

BIO

Yaser A. Al-Malhan was appointed as CEO of LSC Company in 2023, bringing with him over 15 years of experience across various relevant sectors. Before joining LSC Company, Al-Malhan held key leadership positions at prominent organizations such as Aramco, SADARA, and PIF subsidiaries, where he achieved remarkable accomplishments. Under his visionary leadership, the company is poised to enter a new era of growth and development.

How has LSC contributed to the advancement of the Kingdom's supply chain infrastructure?

As the Kingdom's economy expanded, there was a growing need for robust logistical solutions to support its ambitious development goals. We recognized early on the critical need for comprehensive logistics solutions that went beyond basic freight forwarding, and we responded by expanding our services from 2PL to advanced 3PL, 4PL, and 5PL models. This strategic shift allowed us to offer end-to-end logistics solutions tailored to the specific needs of our clients, including real-time inventory and fleet management via our integrated ERP system. Today, LSC serves some of the largest and most impactful industries in Saudi Arabia, including manufacturing, retail, FMCG, F&B, automotive, sports sector and electronics. By aligning our operations with the strategic economic goals of the Kingdom, LSC not only enhances supply chain efficiency for top brands, but also supports the broader economic landscape of Saudi Arabia. Our wide-ranging warehousing footprint, now exceeding 250,000sqm across key locations, positions us as a crucial player in the Kingdom's supply chain infrastructure, driving growth and innovation across industries that are essential to the nation's GDP.

What sectors or industries do you see as key areas of growth for LSC in the coming years?

From the start, LSC has been dedicated to supporting the Kingdom's ambitious economic diversification efforts, aligning our logistics services closely with the objectives of Vision 2030. This focus has consistently guided us toward industries directly tied to the Kingdom's strategic objectives. Our expertise in transporting and warehousing specialized materials, such as pharmaceuticals, medical products, electronics, chemicals, and construction materials, positions us at the forefront of logistics solutions for these critical sectors. Today, with numerous specialized projects across the Kingdom requiring precise handling and tailored logistics solutions, LSC stands out as a pioneer in this field. Our extensive experience managing large-scale, high-profile events proves our ability to navigate the complexities of specialized logistics. Concentrating on these strategic sectors will ensure that LSC grows alongside the Kingdom and remains at the forefront of the Vision 2030 scale-up efforts. ✖

LSC
شركة المخازن والخدمات المساندة

LOGISTICS, ELEVATED.

Your Trusted Partner in Warehousing, Freight Forwarding, and Special Project Logistics



250,000 SQM of warehousing across Saudi Arabia

250 Specialized trucks | Certified and professional forwarders

10 million shipments moved

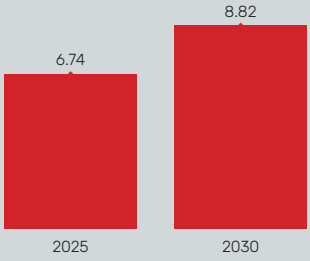
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ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT MARKET (USD BN)

SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE



AIR TRAFFIC PASSENGERS, 1H2025

SOURCE: GACA

NO. OF PASSENGERS (MN)

1H2024	62
1H2025	66
Change	7%

NO. OF FLIGHTS ('000)

1H2024	445.8
1H2025	463.8
Change	4%

AIR CARGO ('000 TONS)

1H2024	606
1H2025	575
Change	-5%

NO. OF DESTINATIONS

1H2024	130
1H2025	140
Change	8%

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION MARKET (USD BN)

SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE

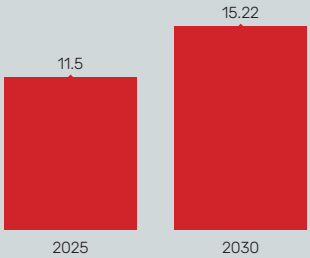




Image: Ta2ng Ko

SKY-HIGH AMBITIONS: Global Connectivity & Mobility

Touch *down*

IN 2025, a series of transformative transport and aviation initiatives are reshaping how the Kingdom connects with the world and with itself. The goal is clear: to make mobility not just a necessity, but a driver of growth, innovation, and opportunity.

At the center of this transformation stands Riyadh Air, the Kingdom's new national carrier. Scheduled to launch its first international routes later this year, the airline represents a major step in expanding Saudi Arabia's global presence. As Tony Douglas, CEO of Riyadh Air, remarked at the US–Saudi Investment Forum, "Launching Riyadh Air is not just about creating another airline: it's about redefining global connectivity from and to Saudi Arabia. Aviation is about people, cultures, and business opportunities." His words reflect a broader ambition to position Riyadh as a bridge between continents, cultures, and markets.

Supporting this vision from the ground up is the construction of King Salman International Airport, one of the world's most ambitious aviation infrastructure projects. Spanning 57sqkm, the airport will include six parallel runways and seven terminals, ultimately serving up to 185 million passengers a year by 2050. Its design combines cutting-edge technology with sustainability, targeting LEED Platinum certification and featuring advanced renewable energy systems. Marco Mejia, Acting CEO of King Salman International Airport, describes it as "a new global benchmark for how airports can operate: not only as transit hubs, but as destinations in their own right, where travel, business, and culture converge."

These developments form part of a coordinated national effort to expand air connectivity and align it with tourism and investment goals. The Air Connectivity Program (ACP) plays a pivotal role in this integration. As ACP CEO Majid Khan explained, "Our framework is meticulously aligned with the National Tourism Strategy. The major cities of Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Medina are conceived as central hubs from which traffic is channeled to destinations such as NEOM, the Red Sea, and Al Baha." This approach ensures that each new flight and airport project supports regional growth and strengthens the Kingdom's global links.

Beyond aviation, the nation is also investing heavily in future mobility, from high-speed rail to electric and autonomous transport. A new rail corridor will soon connect King Salman Airport, Qiddiya, and the King Abdullah Financial District, cutting travel times to under 30 minutes and linking the Kingdom's emerging economic and cultural centers. ✖

FROM RIYADH *to the world*



KSIA is a visionary project linked to the broader national transport and logistics strategy, aimed at providing Saudi Arabia with a sustainable, integrated multimodal transport network supporting both businesses and consumers.

Marco Mejia
ACTING CEO,
KING SALMAN INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
(KSIADC)

How will KSIA contribute to the growth of the aviation sector in Saudi Arabia?
Saudi Arabia is one of the fastest-developing countries in the world, and Riyadh is amongst top 15 fastest-growing cities in the Middle East. This rapid development makes it essential to construct an airport capable of meeting both current and future aviation demands. The Kingdom has undergone a significant social and economic transformation, opening up for businesses and tourism. As a result, passenger numbers at KSIA are predicted to reach 100 million by 2030. KSIA will be essential in meeting Vision 2030 and National Tourism Strategy targets for tourists visiting Saudi Arabia that aims to attract over 150 million tourists by 2030.

What economic benefits does the development of KSIA bring to Saudi Arabia?
KSIA will create 103,000 direct and indirect jobs; as well as significantly boosting Saudi Arabia's non-oil economy through its influence on several sectors. In tourism, the airport will attract more international visitors, bolstering hospitality, retail, and cultural sites. The entertainment sector will thrive with more events, making Riyadh a global entertainment hub. Additionally, the airport will attract investors in cargo, retail, hospitality, and entertainment, further enhancing its economic impact. KSIA will offer direct trade connections to domestic, regional, and international markets and will have the capacity to process 3.2 to 3.5 million tons of cargo by 2050. The airport will enhance Riyadh's global appeal, making it a preferred choice for major events such as Expo2030 and other key events, which will draw global attention, further driving economic activity and creating numerous jobs in construction, services, and event management. Overall, the airport will be instrumental in diversifying the economy and fostering sustainable growth.

With the goal of accommodating up to 100 million travelers by 2030, how is KSIA planning to manage the increased aircraft traffic and ensure a seamless customer journey?
The upgrade to a six-runway airport, along with the additional terminals and expansive airport facilities, is designed to accommodate high volumes of passengers and flights efficiently with capacity built in for future demand. In addition, the airport will focus on operational efficiencies such as state-of-the-art air traffic control systems that will optimize flight scheduling and minimize delays, automated check-in, baggage handling, and security screening systems to expedite passenger processing, and the integration of smart technologies to further enhance operational efficiency and customer experience. Travelers will benefit from superior connectivity with Riyadh's public transport network, which will facilitate smooth transfers to, and from the airport.

In what ways will the airport serve as a gateway for major projects in Riyadh?
KSIA will be the primary gateway for travelers exploring Riyadh and its major attractions and gigaprojects in Riyadh. Offering a distinctive blend of Salmani architecture and a wide range of amenities, retail, and leisure options, the airport will provide many overseas visitors with their first immersive cultural experience of Riyadh and Saudi Arabia. KSIA's vast capacity will significantly enhance tourist and business travel, driving economic growth and attracting global investment. By streamlining access to key cultural, financial, and recreational hubs, the airport will play a pivotal role in supporting these developments. Seamless connectivity to the city will be ensured through modern infrastructure and efficient transportation links, including road and public transit options.

What are the main priorities set in your 2024 agenda?
Our top priority for 2024 is finalizing the airport's masterplan and detailed planning stages. This critical phase will shape the future of KSIA, focusing on redefining the passenger experience. We are committed to creating a seamless and enjoyable journey, from arrival to departure, by reimagining every aspect of airport operations. Additionally, we are diligently studying and implementing best practices in sustainability and innovation throughout the airport's design and operations. By incorporating cutting-edge technologies and environmentally friendly practices, we aim to set a new standard for sustainable aviation. This aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader sustainability goals and reinforces our leadership in the industry. ✖

BIO

Marco Mejia has over 25 years of experience in aviation and infrastructure-intensive sectors, working on major projects in North and South America. Mr. Mejia has also established an effective corporate risk management framework, mitigating potential risks across all business units. Mr. Mejia holds a bachelor's of science degree in civil engineering, and is a Canadian Construction Association Gold Seal certified project manager, and an APEGA-licensed professional engineer.



Image: Markus Mainka



Image: Fedor Selivanov

SKY HIGH *ambitions*

To boost economic development and the burgeoning tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, in late 2022 Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced plans for a new airport in Riyadh; the King Salman International Airport.

SAUDI ARABIA is rapidly becoming one of the fastest-developing countries in the world, and Riyadh is amongst top 15 fastest-growing cities in the Middle East. The incredible social and economic transformation happening in the Saudi Kingdom is paving the way for significant developments in both business and tourism. With more and more opportunities opening up for investors and entrepreneurs, as well as for tourists and visitors, developing an airport capable of meeting both current and future aviation demands is crucial. King Salman International Airport (KSIA), currently under construction in Riyadh, is expected to be exactly that.

"KSIA is a visionary project linked to the broader national transport and logistics strategy," said Marco Mejia, acting CEO of King Salman International Airport in a recent TBY interview. "It will provide Saudi Arabia with a sustainable, integrated multimodal transport network supporting both businesses and consumers." Design and construction of the new airport is being carried out by British architectural firm Foster + Partners, which also designed Saudi Arabia's Expo 2025 Pavilion. Currently underway and set to cover an area of approximately 57sqkm, the construction will comprise six runways and seven terminals, making it one of the world's largest airports once complete (expected 2030).

The new airport will offer a diverse range of facilities and entertainment options, catering to both travelers and non-travelers alike. The airport masterplan includes 12sqkm of residential and recreational facilities, retail outlets, airport support facilities and other logistics real estate. Foster + Partners' 'Wadi Loop' will link the landscaping and real estate developments as a green infrastructure corridor, facilitating quick and easy access between the developments. Furthermore, the architectural plans have been designed with sustainability in mind, including operational efficiency, the use of sustainable materials, renewable energy sources, and green mobility solutions. The airport design also considers minimizing water utilization and waste generation, intending to have as minimal impact on the natural ecosystem around it as possible. According to Mejia, the airport will also be 'Future Proofed', which he said, "anticipates risks related to climate change, technological advancements, social changes, and market trends, ensuring the airport's resilience and adaptability for years to come." The new airport will also feature state-of-the-art air traffic control systems to optimize flight scheduling and minimize delays, automated check-in, baggage handling, and security screening systems to expedite passenger



Image: Falcons Spotters

processing, and the integration of smart technologies, including facial recognition to streamline passenger processing.

The new airport is currently being constructed around the existing King Khalid International Airport (KKIA). Originally built in 1983, KKIA currently has five terminals and two runways and is one of the busiest airports in the Middle East. The expansions that are being carried out now will increase passenger capacity from roughly 25 million passengers annually today to over 100 million annual travelers by 2030 and 185 million by 2050. It will also raise cargo capacity to 3.5 million tons annual by 2050, up from the approximately 157,000 annual tons at present. Travelers at KKIA are already benefiting from enhanced connectivity with Riyadh's public transport network, as the Riyadh Metro's Line 4 opened in December 2024 conveniently connecting it with the city center.

Vision 2030 initiatives to diversify the Kingdom's economy have focused on a number of sectors, including logistics and tourism. With the National Tourism Strategy target to attract over 150 million tourists by 2030, expanded air connectivity and airport capacity will be vital. In addition to increased passenger numbers, the Kingdom also plans to expand the number of direct destinations to 250 and increase in cargo volume to 4.5 million tons. CEO of the Air Connectivity Program (ACP), Majid Khan, told TBY that the National Tourism Strategy "aims to establish direct air connectivity with pivotal global markets including Europe, North America, CIS, India, China, Korea, Japan, and Australia." Since the launch of the ACP, over 60 new air routes have been inaugurated and introduced flights operated by Virgin Airlines in 2024, raising the number of international airline partners to 11 for the year.

More passengers, whether for business, leisure, or as a religious pilgrim, means more commerce. Mejia predicts that the new airport alone will create 103,000 direct and indirect jobs, and boost the country's non-oil economy through its influence on several sectors. Furthermore, the Kingdom's position at the nexus of Europe, Asia, and Africa with land connections to Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the UAE, and Yemen, also positions the country well as a starting point for travelers wishing to explore the Gulf as a whole, opening even more possibilities for new trade partnerships and investments. Ultimately, the new KSIA will boost Riyadh's position as a global logistics hub, stimulate transport, trade and tourism, and act as a bridge linking the East with the West. ✖



MAKING *connections*

Since the launch of the Saudi Air Connectivity Program in 2021, over 60 new air routes have been inaugurated, with 11 in 2024 alone, and ambitious plans for future expansion.

Majid Khan
CEO,
AIR CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

Could you elaborate on the strategic vision and primary responsibilities that you uphold as Air Connectivity Program's lead representative?

Our strategic framework is meticulously aligned with the National Tourism Strategy, which aims to establish direct air connectivity with pivotal global markets including Europe, North America, CIS, India, China, Korea, Japan, and Australia. Although the Australian market poses long-term challenges for direct routes, our immediate focus is concentrated on regions with substantial immediate potential such as large high-volume cities such as London, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Beijing. In response to the vast yet underutilized market potential in Saudi Arabia, we have strategically segmented the nation into major urban centers and secondary cities. The major cities of Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Medina are conceived as central hubs from which traffic is channeled to burgeoning tourist destinations such as Abha, the Red Sea, NEOM, and Al Baha. These areas are witnessing escalating investments in tourism, signifying their emerging prominence in our strategic tourism framework. Since launching the Air Connectivity Program, we have successfully inaugurated over 60 new air routes, and 2024 marks a significant milestone with the inclusion of Virgin Airlines, raising our tally of international airline partners to 11 for the year. This expansion is indicative of the robust demand for direct connectivity, yet it also highlights the challenges we face due to the limited availability of aircraft and the fierce competition for new routes on the global stage.

How does your strategy integrate religious tourism with broader tourism initiatives in Saudi Arabia?

Religious tourism, particularly for European Muslims, often involves segmented travel experiences. Typically, they purchase one ticket for umrah, return home, and then consider other travel options. Our strategy aims to evolve this pattern by promoting Saudi Arabia as not just a pilgrimage site, but a comprehensive leisure destination. We encourage pilgrims to extend their visits and explore diverse attractions, including the historic and cultural richness of AlUla, the burgeoning luxury destinations along the Red Sea, and the urban appeal of cities like Riyadh and Jeddah. By broadening the scope of our tourism narrative, we invite visitors to experience the multifaceted beauty and cultural wealth of Saudi Arabia, transforming their travel into a more enriching and extended stay.

What primary challenges have you encountered in your role, and what are your strategies to address these challenges?

One of the most significant challenges we face is altering the prevailing perceptions that incentives are sufficient to attract airline operations. My belief is firmly rooted in the power of partnership and convincing potential airline partners of the market's profitability and viability rather than merely offering incentives, which may be misconstrued as subsidies. Achieving progress in air connectivity within the local ecosystem requires a shift in perspective, from seeing it as a simple transactional process to recognizing it as a strategic, collaborative effort. To support this transition, joint initiatives will play a vital role, as there is currently emerging awareness of air connectivity in Saudi Arabia. This is understandable, given that the field is relatively new here compared to regions like Europe, where it has been evolving over several decades.

Looking toward the future, what key objectives do you aim to achieve by the end of the coming fiscal year?

Our primary ambition for 2025, and indeed leading up to 2030, is to significantly expand our air route network in alignment with the National Tourism Strategy and National Aviation Strategy. This includes intricate, long-term planning with major carriers, particularly from the US, where the decision-making timelines can extend from several months to several years. By proactively building a robust pipeline for both major urban centers and smaller regional airports, we aim to enhance the overall capacity and connectivity of Saudi Arabia's air travel network, thereby fostering a sustainable growth trajectory in line with Vision 2030's ambitious goals. ✖

BIO

Majid Khan brings a distinguished track record in aviation and route development to his new role as CEO of the Saudi Air Connectivity Program. With a history of numerous leadership roles within the industry, he most recently served as vice president of the aviation development at IGA Istanbul Airport, where he spearheaded a highly successful recovery of air traffic operations amidst the pandemic. Khan is now poised to direct the Air Connectivity Program, a critical component of Vision 2030.



REACHING *new heights*

Overseeing operations across 22 airports throughout the Kingdom, Cluster 2 has crafted a multi-faceted strategy focusing on key areas of growth and enhancement to increase passenger numbers, fortifying Saudi Arabia's position as a regional aviation hub.

Ali Masrahi
CEO,
CLUSTER 2 AIRPORTS

In what ways does Cluster 2 align its operational strategies with the National Aviation Strategy and the overarching Vision 2030 agenda?

Vision 2030 is our beacon guiding the trajectory of Saudi Arabia's future development. This comprehensive framework provides a roadmap for national advancement, ensuring a holistic approach to growth and prosperity. The transportation logistic strategy and the National Aviation strategy delineate ambitious goals for the aviation sector, including a tripling of passenger numbers to 330 million by 2030, expansion of direct destinations to 250, and an increase in cargo volume to 4.5 million tons. Cluster 2, as a key player in Saudi Arabia's aviation landscape, mirrors this strategic alignment by anchoring its operational tactics to the National Aviation strategy. For example, plans are underway to triple passenger capacity from 12 million to 41 million by 2030, closely mirroring Vision 2030's projections for annual passengers. Similarly, efforts are being directed toward a 138% increase in international destinations by the same year, further solidifying alignment with national aviation objectives. By leveraging strategic foresight, innovation, and a commitment to excellence, Cluster 2 is poised to propel the aviation sector toward new heights.

How does Cluster 2 adapt its strategies to stay competitive and meet the evolving needs of travelers?

In our strategic approach, digitalization and technology are indispensable pillars driving innovation and enhancing the overall passenger experience within our airports. A key focus of our digitalization efforts revolves around minimizing waiting times. Through the integration of cutting-edge technologies, we are poised to significantly reduce queuing durations, ensuring a seamless and efficient flow of passengers through our terminals. Furthermore, our commitment to convenience extends to the introduction of self-check and self-drop facilities, empowering passengers with greater autonomy over their travel experience. Given the importance of connectivity in today's digital age, we prioritize the provision of Wi-Fi services throughout our airport facilities.

Could you elaborate on the strategic endeavors that facilitated the 6% YoY increase in flight frequency and a 15% surge in passenger volume in 4Q2023?

Our close collaboration with airlines, particularly in the exploration of new routes and destinations, has been pivotal in driving growth. In the past year alone, we successfully inaugurated several new international destinations, expanding our network from eight to 12 compared to 2022. Additionally, the introduction of new domestic routes, such as Tabuk to Medina and Tabuk to Abha, has significantly bolstered passenger traffic. Furthermore, strategic initiatives aimed at optimizing aircraft utilization have contributed to the surge in passenger numbers. By transitioning from narrow-body to wide-body aircraft at select airports, we have been able to accommodate greater passenger capacity and meet the growing demand for air travel efficiently.

What types of partnerships are you seeking?

Airport operations rely heavily on collaboration with various stakeholders, including passport control, security authorities, and airlines. We have established partnerships with numerous stakeholders, with significant collaboration evident in our engagement with initiatives such as the air connectivity program. Collaborating with local relevant authorities, private and government sectors are essential for facilitating the approval of new routes. Furthermore, we have forged a partnership with the tourism sector, exemplified by a signed agreement in 2023. Our relationship with key airlines such as Saudi Airlines and Flynas is also paramount, given their significant presence within Cluster 2. The notable increase in international passenger numbers across several Saudi airports in 2023 underscores the impact of collaborative efforts across stakeholders. For example, airports such as Abha experienced a remarkable 158% increase in international passengers, while AlUla witnessed a staggering 222% surge compared to 2022. Similarly, Tabuk saw an 82% increase, and Jazan experienced an unprecedented 306% rise.

What primary objectives have you set for 2024?

Our primary objectives for the upcoming year and beyond encompass expanding capacity, improving operational efficiencies through digitalization, and enhancing the capabilities of our workforce. Furthermore, investing in the development of our human capital is paramount. Strengthening the capabilities of our workforce is essential to propelling our airports into the future and ensuring sustained growth and excellence. ✖

BIO

Ali Masrahi, the CEO of Cluster2 Airports, brings over two decades of experience in engineering, project management, and strategic planning to his role. Prior to joining Cluster2 Airports, he achieved impressive results in various leadership positions in government and private sectors. He worked as VP of National Transformation Center, overseeing strategic planning at the national level. Prior to that, he managed project and operational excellence at PepsiCo Middle East and India, and also worked in production management at Almarai.

AIRLINES

Logistics and connectivity are key facets of Saudi Vision 2030, bringing the world to Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia to the world.



Tony Douglas
CEO,
RIYADH AIR

LAUNCHING RIYADH AIR is not just about creating another airline; it is about redefining global connectivity from and to Saudi Arabia. Aviation is about people, cultures, and business opportunities. With Riyadh emerging as a world-class destination, it is our responsibility to build an airline that provides seamless, premium connectivity for both international travelers and Saudi citizens. We are proud to have strategic partnerships with US companies, including GE for our engines, and Delta Air Lines as a headline partner. Our fleet includes Boeing 787 Dreamliners, with the first batch already on the assembly line in Charleston, South Carolina. Yes, there are supply chain challenges globally, but through strong partnerships and proactive planning, we are meeting our delivery targets. We are working to offer a guest experience that begins before boarding, from New York or Atlanta, with the same Saudi hospitality travelers will experience upon arrival in Riyadh or anywhere across the Kingdom. Riyadh Air will be a flagship carrier not just in name, but in redefining the aviation experience.

**Remarks recorded during the US–Saudi Investment Forum held on May 13, 2025.*



Richard Branson
FOUNDER,
VIRGIN AIRLINES

VIRGIN ATLANTIC has always been about doing things differently and about challenging the status quo. Back when we launched, British Airways was the giant, and everyone thought we did not stand a chance. But we focused on people: delivering better service, better entertainment, better experiences. That is what helped us grow, and it is what keeps us going. We have always been bold enough to do things our own way. And now, being here and witnessing what is happening in Saudi Arabia, I see that same spirit. There is a boldness here, a willingness to innovate, to take risks, and to invest in the future. That is what makes this moment so powerful. You are not just keeping pace with the rest of the world; you are setting your own direction. You are leading. It is an honor to be here and to see this transformation happening in real time. Saudi Arabia has such a bright future ahead, and I am thrilled Virgin Atlantic can be part of it. Hopefully, we will continue to grow alongside you and, one day, fly into even more of your cities.

**Remarks recorded at the launch event of Virgin Airlines in Saudi Arabia.*



Steven Greenway
CEO,
FLYADEAL

IN THE LAST FIVE years, the easing of restrictions in Saudi Arabia has significantly boosted the aviation industry. The introduction of e-visas and visas on arrival has made travel significantly easier. Vision 2030 aims to develop the aviation sector to match established markets. Domestically, we are growing at about 10-15% annually, and international growth is also booming. The Kingdom's openness attracts curious visitors, including pilgrims and general tourists, and creates new market segments. Our aircraft orders reflect this growth; we will expand to over 100 by 2030, which represents a tripling in size within six years. While many airlines face pilot shortages, we have a surplus of trained pilots and cabin crew, thanks to the Kingdom sending cadets to train abroad. Even achieving only 50% of our plans will position us as a world leader. Air travel is essential here due to large distances and lack of alternatives. Upcoming infrastructure will be game-changing, supporting both domestic and international growth plans, facilitating our expansion, and connecting the Kingdom more effectively.



Moutaz Alshami
CEO,
TPAC

WHEN WE LAUNCHED TPAC in 2007, the vision was simple: to deliver a standard of private aviation that matched the best in the world, right here in Saudi Arabia. Over the years, that vision has evolved into something larger by becoming a symbol of Saudi excellence on the global stage. Our goal is to leave behind not just a successful company, but a legacy of trust, innovation, and service that helps define our nation's private aviation industry for generations to come. We offer access to over 15,000 aircraft worldwide, serve multiple verticals, from luxury charters to medical flights, and operate under a strict ethos of privacy and discretion. We combine local expertise with a truly global network, giving our clients unmatched flexibility without ever compromising on service excellence. We are an enabler of Vision 2030 projects, attracting investors, executives, and high-profile visitors from around the world. TPAC is positioned to move them with efficiency, privacy, and style. We are expanding our operational footprint to directly support these destinations and ensure we are a trusted partner in Saudi Arabia's transformation.



Ismael S. Alkoshy
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
SAUDIA ACADEMY

BIO

Ismael S. Alkoshy, a highly accomplished and experienced aviation professional, was appointed Managing Director of PSAA in 2018. With a remarkable career spanning over 35 years, he has held various executive positions in the aviation sector, showcasing his expertise and leadership skills. Prior to his appointment at PSAA, he served as the CEO of the Saudia Royal Fleet, where he successfully led the organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

How has Saudia Academy evolved to become a leading aviation training center in the region?

Saudia Academy, previously known as Prince Sultan Aviation Academy (PSAA), has been pivotal in advancing Saudi Arabia's aviation industry as part of Vision 2030 goals. Saudia Academy is well-prepared to aid the industry's transformation, tackling challenges such as simulator maintenance a crucial, yet complex aspect due to the high cost and scarcity of skilled technicians globally. Founded in 1959, Saudia Academy stands as the oldest training center in the Middle East. Historically, Saudia Academy has concentrated on training for Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia), thus bolstering domestic aviation expertise. Over the past two decades, Saudia Academy has embarked on a significant transformation toward privatization, shifting from a mission-oriented approach to a more commercial model, akin to the paths taken by former government-owned entities like Lufthansa and British Airways. This strategic pivot is informed by case studies of these companies, providing Saudia Academy with valuable insights and a clear roadmap for the future. The academy's role now encompasses a wider array of sectors, with a growing focus on military and security needs, which includes new projects and collaborations, such as a recent training services agreement with Medevac. In the commercial sector, Saudia Academy is actively engaging with stakeholders, such as Saudia Technic, to assess and meet their training needs, crucial for long-term planning in aviation. Saudia Academy's commitment extends to operating equipment and providing comprehensive support, while emphasizing local expertise and infrastructure, including simulator maintenance.

Which particular areas of the aviation industry do you intend to prioritize and develop further?

Our aim is to support the broader training needs of the Kingdom, including the military and commercial sectors in the Middle East. Our plan is to establish a new location in Riyadh and it is considered as our second key project. Additionally, we are obtaining qualifications for helicopter training, a new endeavor driven by increasing demand in the booming helicopter business. This initiative complements our focus on supporting the military and expanding technical training capacity in the Kingdom. ✖



Edward O'Byrne
CEO,
AVILEASE

BIO

Edward "Ted" O'Byrne brings nearly 30 years of extensive experience in commercial aviation and airfreight logistics. O'Byrne formerly served as managing director and co-head of aviation at CARLYLE and, prior to that, as chief investment officer at AERCAP. With a background in marketing and aircraft contract negotiation at AIRBUS, he has structured and negotiated multi-billion-dollar aircraft sales transactions. O'Byrne holds an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Can you share insights into the company's journey in becoming a key enabler of economic transformation?

We have operated with a dual mandate since our inception: first to establish ourselves as a top 10 global aircraft lessor, managing fleets and maintaining a balance sheet ranging from USD20-25 billion; and second, to actively contribute to the development of a robust and dynamic Saudi aviation ecosystem. Our involvement spans various facets of the ecosystem, including taxation, fiscal policies, legal frameworks, and investment in training programs in collaboration with universities to bolster infrastructure. AviLease's strategic direction has seen us rapidly expand, currently ranking within the top 16 globally with a fleet of 180 aircraft. Looking ahead, we anticipate further transactions on international and local level, with entities such as Riyadh Air. At the core of our mission is the financing of local fleets to support the acceleration of airlines' growth. Our endeavors are closely aligned with Vision 2030 and the National Aviation Strategy, which encompasses three key objectives: to accommodate a projected increase in passengers to 330 million annually, necessitating substantial aircraft financing estimated at approximately USD35 billion; doubling cargo capacity to 4.5 million tons annually; and enhancing connectivity, with a target of 250 global destinations accessible directly from Saudi Arabia.

Building an ecosystem requires adequate resources to sustain it. What is the current status in this regard?

We are venturing into sectors where there is no precedent locally. Establishing an aircraft leasing company in Saudi Arabia is a pioneering endeavor. There are a limited amount professionals in the region with expertise in this domain. Hence, our human capital and training strategy is crucial. The Saudi talent we have onboarded primarily comes from the banking sector, and we are providing training in the nuances of asset management. Additionally, we are collaborating with institutions such as Prince Sultan University, engaging with students studying finance and technical disciplines. We have also extended invitations to junior analysts from banks to familiarize them with our business operations. Overall, we are making substantial investments in human capital development. ✖



Image: wahyuaceh

OPERATORS *& service providers*

The momentum of Vision 2030 is carrying Saudi Arabia's aviation sector to new heights.



Moaaz Khanani
MANAGING PARTNER,
KAMS GLOBAL

VISION 2030 is reshaping Saudi Arabia into a global economic powerhouse. The National Aviation Strategy is a vital element of this transformation. The strategy envisions positioning the Kingdom as a logistics hub for passengers and cargo by 2030 with annual passenger traffic of 330 million to 250 international destinations and enhanced cargo capacity of 4.5 million tons. Our mission is to deliver a comprehensive range of services aligned with realizing these goals. We collaborate with both public and private sector organizations to ensure compliance with global aviation standards and industry best practices. We are also involved in infrastructure projects that directly contribute to Vision 2030's objectives. For example, our turnkey helipad development and refurbishment program addresses a critical gap in the Kingdom's aviation ecosystem. By bringing these facilities into regulatory compliance, we enhance safety, security, connectivity and operational efficiency. What set us apart was our ability to act as a bridge between global aviation standards and local market needs. Our success lies in the alignment of our services with Vision 2030 and the broader transformation of the Middle East aviation ecosystem. Our focus is workforce development, specifically local talent, experience and expertise. We must invest in our own people, whether through apprenticeships and knowledge transfer initiatives or partnerships and investments to build a pipeline of local talent ready to meet the opportunities of tomorrow.



Osama Shasha
CEO,
MIDDLE EAST TASKS COMPANY (METCO)

METCO IS AT THE FOREFRONT of the transformation of the local aviation sector, seamlessly integrating advanced security, operational, and construction solutions. Our portfolio spans security screening systems, baggage handling innovations, and state-of-the-art surveillance technologies. Additionally, METCO excels in the construction and facility management of major airports, ensuring they are equipped to handle growing demand. This multi-faceted approach has positioned us as the market leader, trusted for our ability to enhance operational efficiency and scalability. The launch of our manufacturing facility in 2025 marks a major milestone. This advanced facility will produce critical security and screening equipment, employing over 150 Saudi professionals. By 2026, the facility aims to achieve 40-50% localization in aviation security equipment, significantly reducing reliance on imports and fostering domestic innovation. Our knowledge transfer initiatives prioritize upskilling local talent, bridging the gap between global expertise and domestic capacity. Through partnerships with global technology leaders, METCO offers specialized training programs in engineering, system integration, and security management. This not only empowers Saudi professionals, but also strengthens the resilience and adaptability of the Kingdom's security infrastructure. We are also expanding our presence in NEOM, the Red Sea region, and other key projects, including the development of advanced screening systems for new terminals.



Nicholas Cole
CEO,
DAA INTERNATIONAL

THE SAUDI AVIATION SECTOR is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by Vision 2030's integrated objectives for economic diversification, tourism growth, and infrastructure modernization. This transformation is underpinned by the rise of inbound tourism, particularly linked to the gigaprojects such as The Red Sea, NEOM, AlUla, and others. daa International is proud to be a core aviation partner in enabling access to such destinations. We see Saudi Arabia rapidly asserting itself as one of the world's most dynamic aviation markets, boasting a regional passenger growth rate of 7% compared to Europe's 2.3%. Thus, Saudi Arabia is the cornerstone of daa International's global operations and strategic growth agenda. Our involvement spans the entire aviation value chain, from airport operations and aerodrome licensing to passenger experience enhancement and human capital development. Within the Kingdom, our team has grown to over 72% Saudization, with local employees taking on leadership and frontline roles. We have consistently introduced progressive and impactful initiatives, including pioneering the introduction of public-facing female employees in airports and advocating for the removal of gender-segregated seating areas, marking a clear alignment with broader social reforms initiated under Vision 2030. In terms of business impact, Riyadh's KKIA Terminal 5 achieved the highest Airport Service Quality (ASQ) scores in the Kingdom within 18 months of our takeover and later surpassed regional benchmarks.



LUXURY *meets sustainability*

Blacklane is a global company with operations in more than 50 countries and over 500 cities. Its journey into Saudi Arabia began around 2023 through an introduction from MENA Investments to TASARU Mobility Investments.

Adib Samara
GENERAL MANAGER,
BLACKLANE SAUDI ARABIA

How does Blacklane interpret hospitality within the chauffeur experience?
Hospitality is core to our value proposition. It is not just about transporting guests, but about creating an experience of comfort and ease. That begins the moment a guest is greeted and continues throughout their journey. For example, in Saudi Arabia's hot climate, we provide premium hydration kits and adjust car temperatures proactively. In addition, we are exploring integrations that personalize in-ride experiences such as curated music, ambient scent, and temperature settings. We are also exploring wellness focused features, including recovery support devices and sensory enhancements to enrich the in-ride experience. Having a guest arriving at their destination refreshed because their journey was designed to aid recovery is the level of thoughtfulness we aim for. We are also considering adapting biometric integrations, mood-based adjustments, and sensory preferences. In essence, we are designing a mobile luxury lounge where every detail is created to enhance wellbeing.

How do you embed Saudi cultural elements into your offering?
Localization is not optional, but foundational. For instance, we are designing new chauffeur attire based on the traditional Saudi Sadu pattern. While it may seem minor, these subtle cultural signals resonate deeply with local customers and build brand trust. We are also developing a Chauffeur Training Academy that will equip Saudi men and women with the skills to deliver world-class, culturally nuanced service. It is a long-term investment in talent development and aligns with Vision 2030's focus on human capital. The training curriculum not only focuses on operational excellence, but emphasizes emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and language skills. This makes our chauffeurs ambassadors of both Blacklane's values and the Kingdom's rich cultural heritage.

Blacklane has embraced EV transformation. How does this strategy support Vision 2030 and your operational model?
Our sustainability strategy aligns directly with Vision 2030. We aim to make electric vehicles the backbone of our Saudi operations. We are collaborating with Lucid for vehicle integration and EVIQ to build dedicated EV charging hubs across the country. These are not just infrastructure investments, but part of a holistic shift in how we operate. Our Riyadh hub will feature a custom-built charging ecosystem to ensure uptime, efficiency, and seamless scheduling. We are also integrating EV readiness into our Chauffeur Academy training programs, so that service consistency is not compromised as we scale. All this contributes to a smarter, greener, more resilient premium mobility ecosystem. Our transition to electric is not only a shift in technology, but a transformation we have already put into practice. EVs are still relatively new to the market, and premium clients have high expectations around reliability, comfort, and discretion. The challenge is proving that sustainability and premium service are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. We address this by focusing on experience-led education. The more clients use our EV services, the more they recognize the value. We have also relied on powerful partnerships like those with Emirates or Riyadh Air to introduce guests to our services through platforms they already trust. We are also addressing infrastructural challenges by investing in charging networks and building collaborative frameworks with municipal authorities to streamline permits and deployment timelines. The challenge is not simply introducing something new, but reshaping expectations. Our role is to demonstrate that sustainability and premium service are not opposing concepts but mutually reinforcing elements of a modern luxury experience. ✖

> "We aim to make electric vehicles the backbone of our Saudi operations."

BIO

Adib Samara has spent over a decade shaping the growth of the region's mobility sector through key leadership roles in pioneering start-ups and scale-ups. As part of Careem's early team, he was instrumental in establishing its business development and partnerships programs across several markets that led to its acquisition by Uber. Today, Samara is the general manager for Blacklane in Saudi Arabia and is in a unique position to build Blacklane's regional headquarters in Riyadh and expand its premium services across the Kingdom.

The global
chauffeur service

BLACKLANE



Redefining Premium Mobility in Saudi Arabia

Blacklane is setting a new benchmark for chauffeur services in the Kingdom, combining the highest global standards with a locally resonant offering and exclusive partnerships that support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030

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DRIVING *growth*

With 41 branches across key destinations and a fleet of over 35,000 vehicles, Lumi offers car rentals, leasing, and motorcycle services, providing comprehensive transportation solutions throughout the Kingdom.

Azfar Shakeel
CEO,
LUMI RENTAL

How is Lumi capitalizing on Saudi Arabia's rapidly expanding tourism and events sector?
We are constantly in the process of aligning our fleet and operational strategy with Saudi Arabia's evolving tourism landscape. Our luxury fleet, including 400 BMW vehicles, has been in high demand for global events such as the FIFA World Cup and the Saudi Cup. These events demonstrate the critical need for premium transportation services. Additionally, we provide dedicated shuttle services for corporate gatherings, exhibitions, and entertainment events. With the Kingdom's commitment to hosting large-scale events, our ability to scale and deploy high-end mobility solutions remains a key competitive advantage. The increase in business travel and high-profile government initiatives further reinforces our need to expand our specialized event mobility services.

How does Lumi structure its revenue streams, and where do you see the most significant growth potential?
Today, Lumi has three lines of integrated businesses, each contributing significantly to our revenue. B2B leasing contributes approximately 35-36% of our revenue, while rentals contribute 31% and used car sales 33%. Still, the growth trajectory of B2C in today's environment is undeniable, and we are strategically focusing on B2C to capture market share and enhance profitability. This segment demands convenience and rapid digital adoption, which aligns perfectly with our omnichannel strategy. Our hybrid business model, offering both flexible short-term rentals and long-term leasing, enables us to capture demand across corporate and consumer segments. With the Saudi market embracing digitalization, we anticipate an increasing shift toward B2C as customers seek seamless mobility solutions. Moreover, the rise of ride-sharing and corporate mobility solutions is further enhancing the prospects of the B2C market.

How is Lumi forging alliances to secure its leadership in Saudi Arabia?
Partnerships and collaborations are crucial to drive our growth in Saudi Arabia's ever-evolving mobility sector. As part of our core strategy to ensure our dominance, we have entered into exclusive partnerships with some of the Kingdom's key megaprojects including NEOM where we have been appointed as the sole provider of self-driving vehicles. Additionally, we are the preferred mobility partner for AlUla, a growing tourism and cultural hub. Our strategy is to align with giga-projects that will shape the Kingdom's future economy, including The Red Sea, Qiddiya, and Diriyah. These collaborations ensure that Lumi remains at the forefront of Saudi Arabia's evolving mobility ecosystem. Moreover, we are engaging with technology firms and logistics providers to further enhance our operational efficiency and customer offerings.

What is Lumi's five-year vision, and what are the biggest challenges Lumi anticipates as it scales operations?
Saudi Arabia's land mobility industry is in the midst of unparalleled transformation. While over 1,000 rental companies operate in the market, only a handful have the scale and infrastructure to meet the huge demand and compete at the highest level. Our ambition is to expand our fleet to 55,000-60,000 vehicles by 2027, securing our place among the country's largest operators. Scaling at this magnitude requires robust fleet management, customer acquisition strategies, and regulatory compliance. Competition is intensifying, with both established players and new entrants vying for market share; however, our differentiators, namely innovative technology, corporate partnerships, and robust infrastructure, position us for continued success. We are committed to agility and continuous innovation, ensuring that we stay ahead of industry trends and customer expectations. Our focus remains on building an adaptable business model that can sustain long-term growth while meeting the dynamic needs of the Saudi mobility landscape. ✖

BIO

Azfar Shakeel has over 26 years of professional experience at Fortune 500 companies and large conglomerates in the Middle East, including Gillette, P&G, Coca-Cola, and Hanco Holding. Today he is CEO of Lumi Rental.

لومي
lumi

#SAUDI ARABIA'S LEADING CAR RENTAL COMPANY



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+35K
Vehicles In Our Fleet

41
Locations Across KSA

+280
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+9

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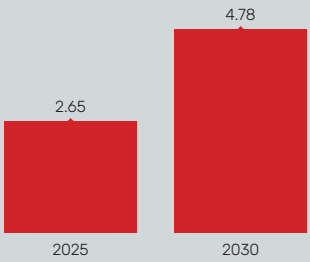
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ENTERTAINMENT AND AMUSEMENT: MARKET SIZE (USD BN)

SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE



ENTERTAINMENT AND AMUSEMENT: MARKET SHARE BY VENUE TYPE (2024)

SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE



63.4% Combined market shared of theme parks and more

36.6% Family entertainment centers

ENTERTAINMENT AND AMUSEMENT: MARKET SHARE BY VISITOR DEMOGRAPHIC (2024)

SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE



52.6% Combined market share of youth, teenagers, and more

47.4% Families



The Royal Diriyah Opera House

Image: DGDA

CENTER STAGE: Entertainment, Media & The Creative Industries

Dinner *and a show*

THE SAUDI AUTHORITIES are advancing a comprehensive strategy to develop its entertainment, media, and cultural sectors as part of a broader effort to diversify the national economy. In 2026, these industries will play an increasingly central role in shaping the Kingdom's global profile and attracting investment in innovation and creativity.

The Public Investment Fund (PIF) remains central to this transformation, directing capital into projects that merge entertainment, sports, and digital media. Two major moves in 2025, the acquisition of Electronic Arts (EA) and a USD1-billion investment in DAZN, the international sports streaming platform, highlight how Saudi investment is extending beyond national borders to shape the global entertainment landscape. Alongside these, Saudi Entertainment Ventures (SEVEN) continues to deliver large-scale leisure and cultural infrastructure, developing cinemas, theme parks, and multi-use entertainment districts designed to enhance quality of life and attract global audiences.

Within the Kingdom, private-sector companies are amplifying this transformation through innovation and audience engagement. Fahad Al Obailan, CEO of Baan Holding, notes that the "entertainment landscape in Saudi Arabia is undergoing a seismic transformation. Our mission is to embed innovation into every part of that journey, from family entertainment to community-driven cultural experiences." His words capture the energy of a sector where creativity and commerce are increasingly intertwined.

For CEO of Black Orange Ahmad Abu Gheith, the focus is on building global-standard storytelling on Saudi soil. "We see creativity as a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's identity," he explains. "Our goal is to tell stories that resonate internationally while empowering local talent to lead this transformation from within." From producing large-scale live events to delivering world-class sports and cultural showcases, Black Orange represents the new face of the Saudi creative ambition.

This growing ecosystem is supported by policy and partnership. The Cultural Investment Conference 2025 introduced new funding programs for film, design, and performance, while Riyadh Season continues to draw millions of visitors each year. Yet the most visible global platform will come with Expo 2030, a milestone event expected to place Saudi Arabia at the center of cultural dialogue.

As Dimitri Kerkentzes, Secretary-General of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), emphasized, "Expo 2030 will not only highlight Saudi Arabia's transformation, it will serve as a platform for the world to engage with the Kingdom's vision for sustainability, innovation, and culture." He added that the event will "showcase how nations can use creativity as a catalyst for cooperation and progress." ✖



EXPO *exposé*

While much has changed since the first World Expo in 1851, the core values of education, innovation, and cooperation remain the underlying objectives of Expos. Riyadh aims to uphold this legacy as it gears up to host Expo 2030.

Dimitri S. Kerkentzes
SECRETARY GENERAL,
BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DES
EXPOSITIONS (BIE)

Since the first World Expo of 1851, what core principles or values have been pivotal in guiding Expo's growth and success?
The first World Expo in 1851 was aimed at educating the public about the numerous changes brought about by the industrial revolution and technological advancements. Under the theme "Industry of All Nations," Expo 1851 London gathered nations in pursuit of shared progress. Over the years, Expos have evolved, while continuing to serve their core mission of educating the public, encouraging cooperation, and fostering progress. Today, in an increasingly connected and fast-paced world, Expos are inclusive and multilateral instruments for sharing practices and constructively contributing to global debates. With humankind's most pressing challenges knowing no borders, Expos bring people together in an open and accessible format, encouraging all aspects of society to engage and to become part of the solution.

Could you elaborate on the importance and benefits for a country to host the Expo event nowadays?
World Expos are by their very nature inclusive and universal events that gather a multitude of nations and cultures in pursuit of progress for all. As such, the benefits of Expos can be measured on a range of different scales, from the unique experiences of visitors, the new opportunities provided to the host country and participants, and the global dialogue and progress made on thematic subjects. For the host city and host country, organizing a World Expo has the potential to be the engine of change, creating major potential for economic growth and citizen engagement. The organization of these major events can lead to significant infrastructure development and the creation or redevelopment of new urban districts, bringing long-term benefits to the host city. Through construction, planning, tourism and the development of new industries, Expos can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and actively spur regional development. Moving forward, I see World Expos increasingly being characterized by their power of transformation, sowing the seeds for long-term cultural growth and supporting sustainable and inclusive economic models. Given the interconnected nature of all the most pressing global challenges, organizing an Expo is a unique opportunity to create a multilateral and inclusive space where, over the course of six months, nations can meet, and ideas, points of view and solutions can be shared for a different, better tomorrow.

How do you see the role and purpose of Expo 2030 Riyadh impacting socioeconomic development and cultural changes?
With Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is embarking on a bold project to sustainably transform its economy and its role in the world, placing it in a privileged position to shape the future for people and the planet. At the same time, as 2030 approaches and efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals grow in urgency, broad global consensus will be required in moving the world's agenda forward, in defining the ambition and scope of the post-2030 era. In hosting Expo 2030 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself at the center of global discussions, asking its own people, and people from around the world, what kind of future they wanted and how this future can be achieved. With the theme "The Era of Change: Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow," Saudi Arabia is inviting countries from around the world not only to exchange on the opportunities and challenges facing the world, but also to actively use foresight in planning for the future. Expo 2030 Riyadh will bring countries, international organizations, businesses and citizens together to conceive a blueprint for a different, better tomorrow. With people and the planet facing risks in the short, medium and long term, Expo 2030 Riyadh will actively contribute to a re-energized world in which cooperation, dialogue and collaboration bring forward the solutions to tomorrow's challenges. ✖

BIO

Dimitri S. Kerkentzes has been Secretary General of BIE, the intergovernmental organization that regulates and oversees international exhibitions, since 2020. He joined the BIE in 2003 and was appointed deputy secretary general in 2015. He graduated from the University of Kent. A Greek national born in London, Kerkentzes speaks English, French, and Greek.



Image: Hiko Photography



TOP OF *the charts*

Billboard is a US music and entertainment magazine publication and multimedia group that has long been synonymous with music charts and cultural influence.

Rami M. Zeidan
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
BILLBOARD ARABIA

What strategic imperatives led SRMG to partner with Billboard to launch Billboard Arabia, and how does this partnership align with Saudi Arabia's broader cultural transformation?

The strategic imperative was clear: the Arab world needed a globally credible platform that could recognize, document, and amplify its music industry driven by data and powered by creativity. To fulfill that mission, SRMG partnered with Billboard, the world's most trusted authority in music charts and culture. This partnership brings world-class standards to the Arab music ecosystem while supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which positions the Kingdom as a global hub for culture and entertainment. Since our launch in December 2023, Billboard Arabia has introduced 13 charts across major dialects, Khaleeji, Levantine, Egyptian, and Maghrebi alongside subgenres such as Arabic Hip-Hop, Indie, Shelat, and Mahraganat, plus the flagship Artist 100 and Hot 100. We also launched the Billboard Arabia Music Awards in Riyadh, the first Billboard Music Awards outside the US and the first dedicated entirely to Arabic music. Leveraging Billboard's global network, we honored Sherine AbdelWahab at Billboard Women in Music 2024 in Los Angeles and Elissa as Global Artist of the Year 2025, extending the reach of Arabic music worldwide.

As the cultural and entertainment sectors continue to expand under Vision 2030, how does Billboard Arabia contribute to the Kingdom's cultural diplomacy and creative economy?

Billboard Arabia is more than a media platform; it is a cultural bridge. By spotlighting Arab talent and authentic storytelling, we celebrate the region's heritage while amplifying its contemporary creativity. Our coverage spans the Kingdom from AlUla and Diriyah to Riyadh and Al Balad and major events like Soundstorm and Formula One Jeddah. Through these stories, we showcase artists connecting with global audiences and reflect Saudi Arabia's growing cultural energy. Working with leading regional brands, we have highlighted over 20 Saudi artists, the emerging sound of the Kingdom. On Saudi National Day, the Saudi National Orchestra and Choir took our cover as they toured globally from Paris and New York to Tokyo and Versailles, a celebration of Saudi culture's resonance around the world.

> "Riyadh is the beating heart of the Arab world's cultural renaissance."

Why was Riyadh chosen to host the inaugural Awards, and how does the local ecosystem support your mission of exporting Arab music?

Riyadh is the beating heart of the Arab world's cultural renaissance. Hosting the inaugural Billboard Arabia Music Awards here reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to placing culture and entertainment at the center of its global story. With government backing, world-class venues, and a vibrant youth population, the Kingdom provides the perfect launchpad to take Arab music global through events, collaborations, and international distribution. The market potential is massive expected to reach USD500 million in subscriptions and USD2 billion in live events within the next decade, creating opportunities for artists, investors, and fans alike to be part of a thriving music ecosystem.

What role does public–private collaboration play in creating a sustainable music ecosystem?

Public–private collaboration has been fundamental. The Music Commission and Ministry of Culture provide infrastructure and policy support, while private partners like Billboard Arabia bring agility, global expertise, and commercial know-how. Together, this model ensures the industry is both artistically vibrant and commercially viable, balancing cultural preservation with innovation. The Saudi Music Commission has been an instrumental partner, from the Billboard Arabia Music Awards to promoting the Saudi National Orchestra and Choir worldwide, including SXSW London 2025. Ultimately, it is about telling Saudi's cultural story to the world. With a young, creative population and the right ecosystem, the Kingdom is ready to lead the region's musical evolution. ✖

BIO

Rami Zeidan is the Managing Director of Billboard Arabia, a partnership between SRMG and Billboard. He leads the platform's mission to spotlight Arabic music globally, overseeing editorial, digital, events, and business development. Known for blending creativity and strategy, he has built cross-cultural initiatives that bridge global brands with regional artists, reshaping how Arabic music is represented in the global entertainment landscape.



LIGHTS, *camera, action*

CineWaves Films is one of the fastest-growing distribution companies in Saudi Arabia. It has the largest Saudi film library in the world and recently became a preferred partner aggregator for Netflix in the MENA region.

Faisal Baltyuor
CEO,
RED SEA FILM FOUNDATION

How is the Saudi film industry evolving, and how is the Foundation supporting its sustainable growth?

The Saudi film industry is in a fast-growing phase, and the quality is improving. This is only the beginning of our collective cinematic journey, which is essential for not only economic growth, but also for the Kingdom's international recognition. KSA is already the biggest cinema market in the region in terms of box-office. Saudi storytelling in particular is booming. In 2024, 18 Saudi films were released in cinemas, generating over SAR56 million, with Foundation-backed Mandoob becoming the highest-grossing Saudi title of the year. Since 2021, the Red Sea Fund has supported around 80 Saudi projects—300 if including international projects—in various stages of development, production, and post-production to bolster the industry. Red Sea Labs, through its multiple initiatives, have upskilled Saudi for the global stage. It has trained 118 Saudi talents across diverse disciplines from music to scripting, and 330 artists from 46 countries through its six year-round programs. Red Sea Souk, our film market, creates direct avenues for local talent development, co-production deals, and film projects with international partners supporting almost 30 Saudi projects. Our flagship event, the Red Sea International Film Festival (RSIFF), has provided Saudi filmmakers a global platform. Since 2021, RSIFF has screened over 520 films, including 160 International Premieres, and highlighted 135 Saudi films across four editions. 2025 marks the festival's fifth edition, a significant milestone that reflects the steady growth of its impact.

How do you plan to evolve RSIFF's programming, international reach, and reputation to compete with established global film festivals?

The RSIFF already competes with the most established festivals. Our aim is to ensure that compelling and untold stories have a platform, a voice, and a spotlight to shine in. We want to complement, not compete. There is a richness of storytelling in this region that has been long underrepresented. By presenting diverse narratives and underscoring shared artistic experiences, we play a role as neutral, creative space where countries and cultures engage outside of traditional frameworks. Additionally, some of the most moving and transformative stories in cinema today are being told by women filmmakers, and we are committed to amplifying their voices. To date, 155 of the 520 films we have screened were directed by women. Our Women in Cinema initiative has received positive feedback and contributes to the development of Arab cinema. Finally, we want to be a cultural bridge and a hub at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and the Arab world. The festival will continue to grow only if it is rooted in its birthplace, the beautiful and vibrant city of Jeddah. We aim to engage more and more the local community of the city and beyond.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for growth, and what are the main challenges to be addressed?

There are tremendous opportunities for Arab cinema, including the rising demand for local content; strong growth in desire for, and successful completion of, regional co-productions and partnerships with global streaming platforms. Red Sea Souk plays a central role in connecting talent with investors, distributors and international markets. By focusing on Asia, Africa, and the wider region, we are unlocking new pathways for growth and global engagement. We have faced some challenges in scaling up infrastructure, building audiences, and ensuring sustainable growth, but there is no recipe for solving those challenges overnight. We believe that the ecosystem we have built and the productions that it is delivering will drive development and bring in those audiences, and that will improve sustainability. ✖

BIO

Faisal Baltyuor is a film producer and pioneer of the Saudi film industry. In June 2025, Baltyuor was named CEO of the Red Sea Film Foundation. He is also a board member of Manga Production and founded both CineWaves Films and Cinehouse, the first arthouse cinema in Riyadh. Baltyuor has been involved in several of the most successful Saudi films, serving as executive producer for the critically acclaimed Perfect Candidate, as well as the box office record-breaker Sattar. He co-produced Goodbye Julia, which won the Freedom Prize at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard), and in 2024, he co-produced Aicha Cannot Fly. He also produced the Saudi Netflix original From the Ashes. Baltyuor was previously the CEO of the Saudi Film Council, and headed film industry development initiatives at the Ministry of Culture. Prior to his leadership roles, he worked as a director and producer in Sydney, Australia, for four years, earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees.



EXCEEDING *expectations*

Black Orange continues to lead in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the ability of local companies to deliver world-class events in the region with an unmatched level of excellence.

Ahmad Abu Gheith
CEO,
BLACK ORANGE LIVE

Can you elaborate on the establishment and operations of Black Orange?
As Saudi Arabia's ambitions continue to scale, so does the demand for cutting-edge, culturally relevant solutions. At Black Orange, we integrate creativity into every aspect of our operations, from business strategy to customer experience, ensuring our work aligns with the Kingdom's evolving market. With a focus on both authenticity and innovation, we have forged partnerships with key industry leaders and nurtured homegrown talent, enabling our team members to rise from entry-level roles to leadership positions. Our rapid expansion across Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dubai, growing to over 300 employees during peak seasons, has positioned us as a preferred partner for global investors and suppliers looking to tap into Saudi Arabia's thriving creative industry. With a young, ambitious team, we remain committed to delivering world-class experiences that redefine the region's creative landscape.

Can you highlight the key experiences and projects that illustrate Black Orange's strengths?
Black Orange has rapidly emerged as one of the leading firms in the sector, delivering large-scale projects for some of the world's most prestigious sporting and entertainment events. As master planners for high-impact experiential projects, particularly in the culture, sporting, and government sectors, we provide a centralized, multi-faceted framework for seamless execution. From hosting the first international tennis competitions in the Kingdom to organizing major motorsport and global sporting events, we oversee a spectrum of functional areas, from event operations to community engagement, ensuring maximum project ROI and societal impact. Our partnerships extend to government-led initiatives, where we serve as a trusted strategic arm, helping shape transformative events that align with Saudi Arabia's vision for global excellence.

Who are your primary clients, and how do you maintain these relationships?
Our primary clients are government entities and major organizations across the region, particularly in the sports, tourism, and entertainment sectors. We collaborate with key stakeholders such as the Saudi Motorsport Company (SAGP) for high-profile racing events and the Tennis Federation in partnership with global IP owners like WTA and ATP. Additionally, we work with the Ministry of Tourism on international initiatives that elevate Saudi Arabia's global presence. We are also supporting NEOM and SOPC in the handover ceremony for the Asian Winter Games, marking the transition of hosting rights from China's Harbin to Saudi Arabia. Beyond the Kingdom, we have been the master planner for Dubai Games for the past three years, working with The Executive Council of Dubai and XDubai to develop large-scale sporting initiatives that enhance community engagement. Through strong partnerships, clear communication, and a commitment to excellence, we continue to deliver world-class experiences that align with our clients' strategic visions.

How do you elevate the experience for end users?
It all begins with understanding our client's vision and their audience's expectations. From VIPs and athletes to media teams and general attendees, we design tailored experiences that ensure seamless engagement from planning to execution. Our approach prioritizes customization, innovation, and attention to detail, ensuring that every touchpoint enhances the overall event experience. Whether through cutting-edge activations, immersive fan zones, or seamless logistics, we create environments that leave a lasting impression. Our impact is reflected in the feedback we receive from attendees, many of whom have experienced global events yet recognize the unmatched level of engagement we deliver in the region. By continuously refining our approach, we set new benchmarks for world-class event experiences.

In addition to your growth targets, what other ambitions do you have for 2025?
While Saudi Arabia remains our focus, we are expanding globally through strategic partnerships with key international players. We have contributed to major tournaments such as the World Cup in Qatar and the Women's World Cup in Sydney and are now involved in the Club World Cup in the US and the 2027 Women's World Cup in Brazil, while also delivering projects across Asia and Europe. Our goal is to showcase Saudi expertise on the global stage, setting new industry standards and reinforcing the Kingdom's role in world-class event execution. ✖

BIO

Ahmad Abu Gheith, CEO of Black Orange, is a visionary leader with a proven track record of transforming the landscape of major international events in Saudi Arabia, the GCC region, and globally. Renowned for spearheading some of the most influential and high-profile projects, Abu Gheith has played a pivotal role in delivering iconic sporting events, international forums, and world-class EXPOs. He has led some of the largest companies in the region as an executive director and chief. His experience is further defined by his work as a senior consultant, where he collaborated with government entities to shape and deliver transformative national projects.

DRIVEN BY VISION.
DEFINED BY EXPERIENCE. DESIGNED FOR IMPACT.

With decades of expertise, we bring bold ideas to life through immersive, boundary pushing live events. We plan, shape and deliver moments that captivate audiences, challenge expectations and leave a powerful, lasting impression.

black orange
LIVE





MOMENTS *that move people*

Founded in 1978, TAIT quickly became one of the most innovative suppliers of touring staging, scenic, and automation for live events.

Soren West
CHIEF EXECUTIVE MENA, TAIT

What is driving TAIT's growing commitment to Saudi Arabia, and what opportunities do you see in the local entertainment industry?

Building on over two decades of presence in the Middle East, including six dedicated years in Saudi Arabia, TAIT is strategically amplifying its focus here. This intensified commitment directly reflects the nation's rapidly growing entertainment sector, a dynamic landscape of opportunity that has made it a primary strategic priority for TAIT's growth and contribution. Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 has galvanized the Kingdom with a united sense of optimism and motivation, and we are honored and excited to be a part of it. With numerous landmarks, global events on the horizon and significant investments in state-of-the-art entertainment infrastructure, including arenas, stadiums, and specialized venues, the needs of the marketplace align with TAIT's core competencies that provide comprehensive solutions for both temporary and permanent installations. This era of unprecedented growth, marked by major upcoming events such as the Islamic Games, Asian Games, Olympic Esports Games, Expo 2030, and the FIFA World Cup 2034, perfectly coincides with TAIT's core promise to "create moments that move people," a commitment that resonates with the Kingdom's ambition to pioneer world-leading events. We are fixated on delivering what's never been done before, bringing our patented technology, advanced show control, and industry expertise to each project. For TAIT, creating moments that move people transcends a mere tagline. It embodies the creation of uniquely human experiences capable of moving hearts, shifting perspectives, inspiring, and building community. This promise, combined with our established regional presence and breadth of capabilities, firmly positions TAIT as a key and valuable partner in Saudi Arabia's dynamic entertainment ecosystem, poised to contribute to the Kingdom's Vision by delivering exceptional and impactful experiences that will resonate for years to come.

"The scale, ambition, and pace of development here are unparalleled, and it is exciting to witness the Kingdom's transformation."

What are your main priorities as you set your agenda for the year ahead?

Our immediate focus is twofold: strengthen the platform we have built in the region, specifically Saudi Arabia, and deliver world-class solutions for our clients and partners. We will continue to formalize our operations and align our KSA presence with the best practices we follow in the US, UK, and other global markets. Simultaneously, we aim to deepen our understanding of the local market and culture. Our aim is to be a pivotal partner in realizing the aspirations of Saudi Arabia's ambitious vision for a sustainable entertainment ecosystem. We are committed to making a meaningful contribution to this burgeoning marketplace through the strategic deployment of advanced technologies, proactive workforce training initiatives, which is exemplified by our crucial youth training partnership with MDLBEAST on BeastEd, and the cultivation of impactful strategic collaborations. When we started 47 years ago, TAIT played a pioneering role in the development of the entertainment industry in the US, Europe, and the UAE, as touring rock and roll events began grow in scale and technicality. Today, Saudi Arabia offers a similar growth trajectory, and we are proud to be a part of it. In the coming years, I expect Saudi Arabia to become one of the most important markets in our global portfolio. The scale, ambition, and pace of development here are unparalleled, and it is exciting to witness the Kingdom's transformation. Saudi Arabia is not only building infrastructure but also defining new global standards for entertainment and events. For us, this is an extraordinary opportunity to contribute to a success story that is reshaping the industry. ✖

BIO

Soren West is the chief executive for the MENA region at TAIT, where he leads strategy, client relationships, and regional expansion across the MENA region. With more than 25 years of experience in live entertainment and production, West has built a global career delivering high-impact projects across concert touring, live broadcast, corporate events, sporting ceremonies, and brand activations. Before joining TAIT, West served as CEO of ATOMIC and co-founded Beame Lighting & Rigging. He also led SOREN WEST LLC. In addition to his executive roles, West is a co-founder and board member of Sierra Whiskey Entertainment. He is also a guest lecturer at the Saudi Entertainment Academy, supporting the next generation of regional talent.



Fahad Al Obailan
CEO,
BAAN HOLDING GROUP CO.
(FORMERLY AL-HOKAIR GROUP)

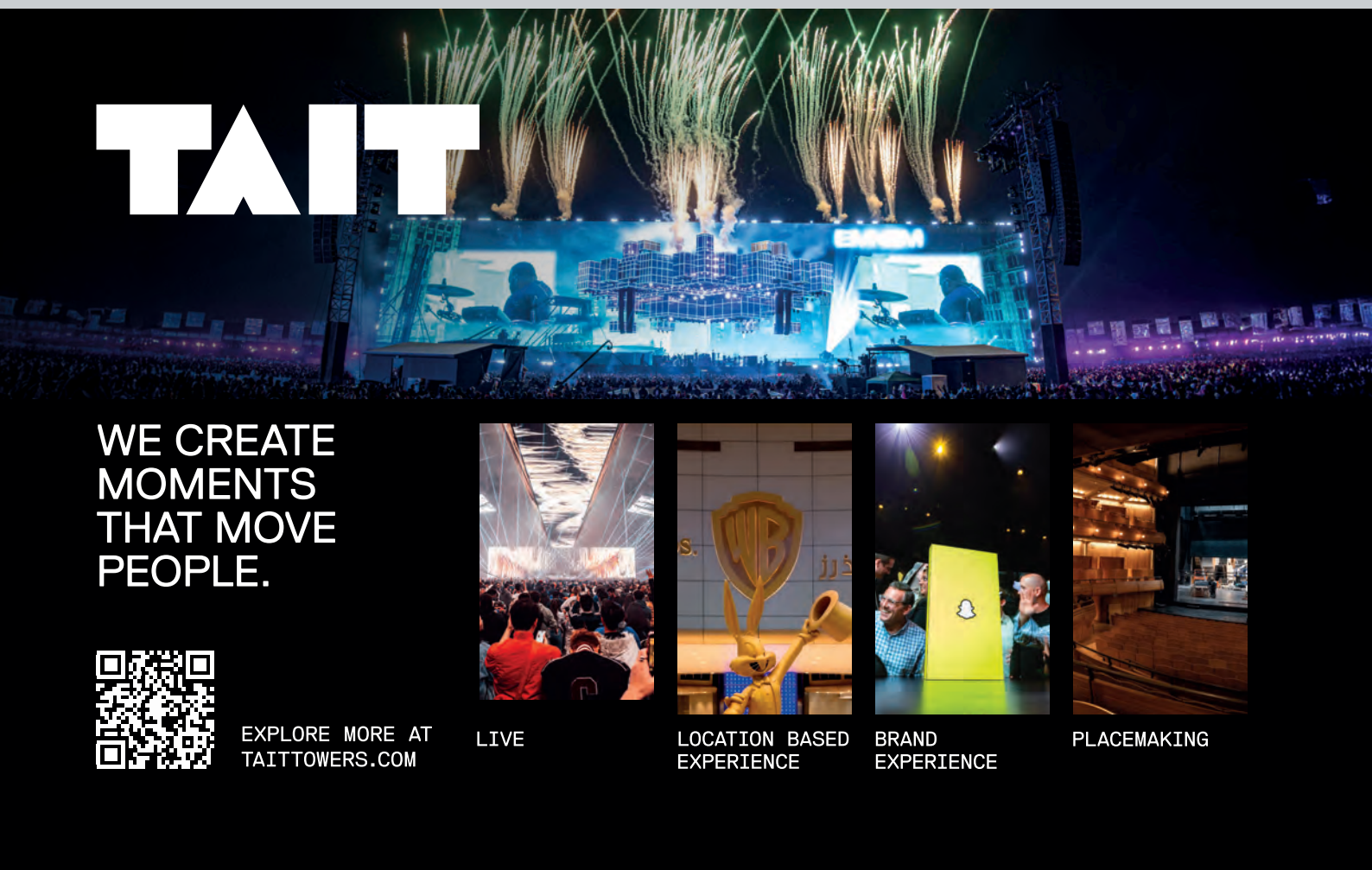
BIO

Fahad Alobailan stands at the helm of BAAN Holding Group Co. as its CEO, bringing a wealth of over two decades of experience to the forefront. His prior role as chief tourism officer at Almosafer, a Seera Group entity, saw him play a pivotal role in evolving the company's consumer division from an online travel agency to a comprehensive omnichannel travel entity.

How are you capitalizing on opportunities in Mecca's transforming hospitality and catering sectors?
Mecca is a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's tourism ecosystem, and its transformation opens significant opportunities. While our previous experience with a hotel in Mecca during COVID-19 posed challenges, we have since re-evaluated our approach. As part of our three-year business plan, we are exploring opportunities to re-enter the Mecca market strategically. Catering, in particular, is a promising sector, especially considering the critical role of hygiene and logistics in serving haj and umrah pilgrims; however, we are cautious about entering the catering space in Mecca without first establishing a strong foundation. Our success with catering in NEOM demonstrates our ability to manage quality and hygiene effectively, but the logistical complexities of Mecca demand additional preparation.

How does BAAN approach international collaborations, and what role do they play in your strategy?
While our primary focus remains on the Saudi market given the unprecedented opportunities arising from Vision 2030, we also have a strong presence in Egypt and the UAE. In Saudi Arabia, we operate 48 family entertainment centers and numerous hotels, while in Egypt, we manage three entertainment centers, and in the UAE, seven. We are open to expanding into GCC countries and other regions, though our approach will be deliberate and focused. The rapid evolution of the Saudi market allows us to harness our expertise locally while keeping an eye on growth opportunities abroad.

What is next for BAAN Holding looking toward 2026?
By streamlining operations and focusing on profitability, we are creating a leaner, more efficient organization. For example, we have closed three underperforming locations, resulting in increased profitability despite lower revenues. Looking ahead, our immediate priorities include optimizing our revenue streams and expanding our catering business. Every venture must either generate profit or be phased out. Additionally, we are committed to reducing operational expenditures through our new organizational structure while maximizing value for our stakeholders. ✖



CONTENT *is kingdom*

Saudi Arabia's entertainment and creative industries are laying foundational infrastructure for Expo 2030, positioning the Kingdom as a global hub for storytelling and media.

THE FIRST WORLD EXPO, held in London in 1851, was designed to educate the public about the rapid changes brought about by the industrial revolution and related technological advancements. While much has changed over the last century, still today, the Expo is known for its core values of education, innovation, and cooperation. World Expos, formally known as International Registered Exhibitions, are held every five years, the most recent taking place in Ōsaka, Japan from April 13 to October 13, 2025. The next is scheduled for October 1, 2030, to March 31, 2031, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the second Middle Eastern city to host the Expo after Dubai in 2020. In preparation for the Expo, and in tandem with Vision 2030 objectives, Saudi Arabia is unveiling a mass of new infrastructure, initiatives, and programs set to transform the Kingdom into a global hub for entertainment and media.

The theme for Expo 2030 will be "The Era of Change: Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow," with subthemes of 'Transformational Technology,' 'Sustainable Solutions', and 'Prosperous People.' "With [this] theme, Saudi Arabia is inviting countries from around the world not only to exchange on the opportunities and challenges facing the world, but also to actively use foresight in planning for the future," said Dimitri S. Kerkentzes, secretary general of the Bureau International Des Expositions (BIE). "Expo 2030 Riyadh will bring countries, international organizations, businesses and citizens together to conceive a blueprint for a different, better tomorrow."

For the host country, organizing a World Expo has the potential to become an engine of change, creating opportunities for economic growth and citizen engagement. "The organization of these major events can lead to significant infrastructure development and the creation or redevelopment of new urban districts, bringing long term benefits to the host city," said Kerkentzes. Indeed, Riyadh is seeing a flurry of new developments, from its expansive new Metro to real estate projects like New Murabba and Qiddiya City, and green initiatives including King Salman Park and tree-planting mega-projects. Moreover, through all the planning and construction, development of new industries and tourism facilities, Expos can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and related supply chains, which are outcomes that are very much in-line with Vision 2030's goal of economic diversification and societal modernization.

Companies like eventlab are gearing up to support the execution of not just a successful World Expo, but a plethora of other Saudi-hosted global events by training and upskilling locals to meet the demands required by such iconic productions. Co-founder Nadim Jamal spoke to TBY about the company's myriad staffing services, including freelancers, full-time employees, and specialized teams., emphasizing the importance of Saudization. "By successfully placing a substantial number of Saudi nationals in key projects, we not only align with national objectives, but also foster a skilled local workforce." As winners of the Best Staffing Agency from the Middle East Event Awards in 2023, eventlab has consistently demonstrated market leadership, and more importantly, the abilities of Saudis to rise to meet the challenges of Vision 2030's transformations.

Off Premises Solutions is another company seeking to capitalize on Saudi Arabia's growing international event and entertainment scene. Officially launched in 2019, it initially focused on offering rentals like bathrooms and cabins for the sports and entertainment industry, but has since diversified into larger operations, such as managing logistics, emergency services, water supply, sewage, facilities, arenas, and other compounds. "We are gearing up for massive events such as the Asian Cup, the FIFA World Cup, and the Expo," CEO Fady Kreidieh told TBY. "Our steady growth ensures that we are well-positioned to handle the scale of these events without overwhelming ourselves or the market."

Big international events open the door for massive opportunities, and Saudi Arabia is welcoming them with open arms. As Kerkentzes told TBY, "With people and the planet facing risks in the short-, medium- and long-term, Expo 2030 Riyadh will actively contribute to a re-energized world in which cooperation, dialogue and collaboration bring forward the solutions to tomorrow's challenges." Exactly the combination Riyadh is looking for as it works towards its Vision 2030 ambitions. ✖



PLAY *with purpose*

Entertainment company Woosh was founded in 2018 to create a long-lasting impact on the quality of life within Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 framework.

Abdullah al Munajem
CEO & FOUNDER,
WOOSH

Could you provide a comprehensive overview of Woosh, namely its vision, evolution, and the sectors in which it operates?
When we founded Woosh, we set out with a simple yet ambitious goal: to create a long-lasting impact on the quality of life within our communities. We focus on four key verticals. The first is Woosh Entertainment, and this includes our indoor recreational centers and sports academies. More than just play zones, they are spaces designed to foster social skills, emotional intelligence, and community spirit. The second is Woosh Business, where we engage corporates and government institutions, offering custom-built programs for internal culture development, wellness, team building, and leadership alignment. It is a B2B and B2G-driven model based on creating impact through immersive experience. Third is Woosh Education, focused on early childhood development. Our kindergartens and after-school programs are designed to blend creative play with structured learning. We want children to grow intellectually and socially in tandem. Finally, Woosh Creative Studio acts as our in-house content creation arm. It supports all other divisions through media, marketing, and digital storytelling, but also develops original IP, which is an increasingly strategic area for us.

One of the most unique aspects of Woosh is its focus on developing IP. Can you elaborate on how that fits into your strategy?
We see IP not only as a business growth driver, but also as a cultural legacy project. Our flagship IP is the Woosh Family, a set of animated characters designed to teach values like empathy, collaboration, and curiosity through storytelling. It is not about pushing local stereotypes, but creating something universally relatable but proudly born in Saudi Arabia. We are producing digital series, interactive storybooks, educational games, and even physical merchandise tied to the Woosh Family. Our aim is to have this IP recognized not just locally, but across regional and global platforms. We are also working on a second major IP, Aziz Neighborhood, in partnership with a prominent Saudi actor. This project will include a live show, musical theater, animation, and even retail experiences. Eventually, we may spin off Woosh Creative Studio as a standalone venture with independent governance and capital.

Your recruitment and training process seems unique. What is the thinking behind it?
We treat recruitment as culture-building, not just talent acquisition. Every candidate undergoes a multi-step process that tests not just competence, but mindset. We use behavioral assessments, group challenges, and cultural fit interviews. One of our group exercises is to create a team game in under 45 minutes while we observe communication, empathy, and leadership. We do not just want staff, but ambassadors. That is why we continue to invest in their development long after they join. And it shows: our Google reviews exceed 13,000 across branches, with a 4.7 average. Most mention our people, not just our services. Consistency in culture is our biggest operational achievement. Whether in Riyadh, Qassim, or Meccah, the guest feedback is the same: "welcoming team, great atmosphere, professional service." That means our culture is portable and our systems are scalable. Such cultural alignment also enables us to expand quickly without losing quality. We know what to look for in new hires, how to onboard them, and how to create a performance-driven but human-centered workplace.

Looking ahead to 2026, how do you define success for Woosh?
Our motto is "We Serve with Measurable Value." By 2026, we want to have data to prove our impact, whether it is reducing screen time among children, improving employee wellness, or increasing parent-child engagement. Success means being a national leader in the quality-of-life space. We want to influence policy, support community building, and be a household name in Saudi Arabia and the broader region; however, ultimately, success is when a generation of Saudi children looks back and says, "Woosh helped shape who I am." That would be the greatest legacy. ✖

BIO

With more than 20 years of experience in operation, services, and leadership, Abdullah al Munajem has worked in leading roles at multi-billion-dollar companies. In 2018, he started Woosh to provide solutions in the entertainment sector. Al Munajem holds a bachelor's in marketing and has completed business programs from IMD Business School.

EVENTS, *entertainment & retail*

As Vision 2030 changes the dynamics of Saudi Arabia's entertainment sector, new opportunities arise for the taking.



Artin Malatjalian
CEO,
RASM

THE RAPID URBANIZATION of Saudi Arabia presents both opportunities and challenges, and RASM is strategically positioned to support the Kingdom's ambitious development plans. Our approach aligns with Vision 2030's goal of creating world-class cities that foster economic growth, attract investment, and improve quality of life. We focus on three key areas: revitalizing urban centers, optimizing commercial spaces, and enhancing mixed-use developments. RASM operates at the intersection of real estate development, property management, and commercial services, offering end-to-end solutions that optimize asset performance. Our differentiation lies in our ability to seamlessly integrate global best practices with a deep understanding of the Saudi market's unique needs. We take a holistic approach that encompasses tenant engagement, operational efficiency, and revenue maximization. Our expertise spans across mixed-use developments, luxury retail destinations, and large-scale commercial hubs, ensuring that each project achieves its full economic and social potential. With a strong commitment to innovation, we incorporate the latest digital tools for smart property management and data-driven decision-making, allowing us to enhance operational efficiencies and deliver unparalleled customer experiences. In the coming years, our focus is on expanding RASM's footprint across Saudi Arabia and the broader GCC region.



Majed Rashad
FOUNDER & CEO,
NEXT LEVEL SAUDI ARABIA

MY CO-FOUNDER AND I established Next Level in 2018, motivated by a shared passion and a desire to align with the national vision. When Vision 2030 began focusing on attracting global events to Saudi Arabia, we recognized an opportunity to build Next Level and support the country's growth in this space. Our growth has been largely organic, driven by two key factors. First, we execute international events for local clients, such as the Ministry of Culture and the Diriyah Gate Development, which has garnered attention from international companies. Second, at our conferences, we manage all communications with speakers, guests, and logistics, strengthening our brand recognition among international attendees. Entertainment is just one facet of what we do. Our core expertise lies in corporate events, conferences, and festivals, with a strong emphasis on project management and creativity. Our aim is to hold significant high-profile projects, such as the World Cup and the G20, where we can contribute our expertise, further enhancing our capabilities in large-scale event management. We are currently expanding into several sectors, including sports, with plans to participate in the upcoming World Cup and Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia, our first ventures in this field. In 2023, we also entered the theater industry, successfully executing 12 plays in a single year.



Abdulaziz AlMuqyteeb
CHAIRMAN,
MUNG INVESTMENTS &
CEO ADD ENTERPRISE

BACK IN 2007, we identified potential in the market, though it was not fully defined or explored at the time. Saudi Arabia was primarily known for oil and gas, but the diversity of our geography and the presence of the two Holy Mosques held immense, untapped opportunities. By 2015, the market began shifting significantly. When Vision 2030 was launched in 2016, everything changed. Vision 2030 capitalized on the very opportunities we had identified years earlier, utilizing them to launch ambitious projects and initiatives. These projects required communication, both locally and internationally, and events became a primary channel for that. During this time, we partnered with the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation and began delivering high-impact initiatives and events in Saudi Arabia and globally. Our experience in the market, nearly a decade at that point, allowed us to adapt quickly and align with the evolving Vision 2030 goals. Today, we focus heavily on experience design, crafting events that communicate effectively and connect deeply with people. In addition, we are organizing events in the UK and US to tap into those markets. These international initiatives highlight our ability to replicate our success beyond Saudi Arabia's borders, while promoting the concept of "Made in Saudi."



Christian Pitrelli
MANAGING DIRECTOR SAUDI ARABIA,
SIX DEGREES

SIX DEGREES ARABIA was launched as a strategic extension of Six Degrees UK and AB Transportation. With a fleet exceeding 300 premium vehicles and buses, we bring a unique blend of global expertise and regional insight to the transport, event logistics, and crowd management sector. Our Riyadh-based operations form the backbone of our presence in Saudi Arabia. They serve not just as logistical support, but as a vital component of Vision 2030, helping to transform the Kingdom into a world-class hub for culture, sports, business, and tourism. Saudi Arabia is rapidly emerging as a leader in the global events industry, and that demands orchestration, foresight, and precision at every level. We are here to meet that demand. Our goals for 2026 are ambitious, yet grounded in reality. We see three interconnected priorities defining our roadmap: scale, specialization, and sustainability. We plan to significantly expand our operational footprint across Saudi Arabia, establishing logistics hubs in Riyadh, NEOM, AlUla, and the Red Sea region. These hubs will serve as decentralized centers for vehicle deployment, staff training, and command operations, enabling us to handle multiple large events concurrently. Additionally, we are investing in electric and hybrid fleets, paperless check-in systems, and modular infrastructure that can be reused across events.



Khaled Hashem
FOUNDER & CEO,
SIGHTSCAPE

THE SCAPE GROUP currently operates two companies, SightScape and VibeScape, with a third, TicketScape, scheduled to launch in 2026. SightScape is the first company in Saudi Arabia to offer city passes in collaboration with Visit Saudi. VibeScape focuses on event management, created to diversify our entertainment portfolio and enhance our value proposition for both customers and partners. TicketScape, our upcoming venture, will bridge B2B and B2C ticketing while also functioning as a marketing hub for entertainment activities. SightScape was founded in 2023, inspired by my personal experience with city passes in the US. The concept resonated deeply with an idea I had as a child to offer an entertainment buffet instead of a food buffet. The rapid development in Saudi Arabia, particularly under Vision 2030, and the enthusiastic support from Visit Saudi motivated us to launch the company. We have been fortunate; the response exceeded our expectations and allowed us to build a brand presence rapidly. Jeddah remains our best-performing city, thanks to its tourism infrastructure and seasonal events. Riyadh, as the capital, has naturally seen strong demand and represents a major opportunity for us. We are also seeing increased interest in Asir, which we plan to launch soon.



Hasan Ali
CEO,
SWIPE UP ME

AT SWIPE UP, we take pride in being a Saudi company deeply rooted in our national identity and cultural heritage. Our team holds over 15 years of experience in managing entertainment projects across Saudi Arabia and the Arab world, while I personally have more than 18 years of professional experience in the field. Our vision is built on showcasing Saudi culture to the world through creative artistic experiences that reflect authenticity while embracing innovation. We aim to merge Saudi cultural expression with global entertainment trends, all while maintaining our distinct Saudi identity in line with Vision 2030, which empowers local creativity and global cultural representation. Our creative edge comes from understanding how the Saudi audience has evolved; with the abundance of entertainment around them, expectations are higher than ever. That is why our approach focuses on creating immersive, emotionally engaging experiences that make the audience feel like part of the event rather than just spectators. Our direction is cultural and artistic rather than purely commercial, and that makes our projects stand out in an increasingly competitive market. Our strength lies in merging Saudi authenticity with international standards, ensuring that the world experiences our culture through a distinctly Saudi lens.



WELL *entertained*

Spacetoon is a leading Middle Eastern media and entertainment company that is expanding its portfolio to include festivals, live shows, experiences, and event management.

Ahmad Weiss
FOUNDER & GENERAL MANAGER, SPACETOON ENTERTAINMENT

Spacetoon's international footprint spans the GCC and Turkey. How does it balance localization with regional integration?
In earlier years, our operations were more centralized, with everything running through our Dubai headquarters. But as our vision expanded, so did our structure. Our new strategy, launched in 2019, is based on establishing regional offices. We work on a matrix of business units, including entertainment, education, commercial, and content, combined with regional activation. Every office is empowered to lead initiatives within these units. We have introduced a diverse range of entertainment concepts tailored not just to each country, but often to the unique character of individual cities. From Riyadh Homecoming, Jeddah Summer Festival, to Qatar Toy Festival, Shop Qatar and Kawaless, our portfolio continues to grow with locally resonant experiences. In parallel, we have launched a regional program to collaborate with leading content creators, aiming to co-develop original IPs and franchises across animation, merchandise, and immersive themed experiences. Our partnerships already include The Moshaya Family, Abir Saghir, El-Daheeh, and the ALJ Sisters, with additional collaborations currently in progress. Through these initiatives, we are engaging new generations while offering fresh, meaningful experiences for both children and their parents. In Turkey, our TV channel there has become the second most-watched nationwide, and our licensing and entertainment teams there are growing quickly. Similarly, in the GCC, we are expanding in Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. Our approach ensures that every regional office develops strong local presence and trust, while aligning with our broader ecosystem strategy.

How does Spacetoon position itself as a comprehensive entertainment and cultural platform for multiple generations?
Spacetoon is still associated strongly with children and animation, though over the years we have evolved into a one-stop shop for entertainment. Our entertainment division now operates through four pillars: festivals, live shows, experiences, and event management. We master plan and execute end-to-end projects, from design to operations. For example, we created immersive experiences like Five Nights at Freddy's, The Mummy in Riyadh Boulevard, and PUBG Mobile's war zone in Riyadh, which drew massive audiences. We also launched large-scale festivals like the Toy Festival, which first launched in Saudi Arabia in 2019, bringing together entertainment, toy launches, and retail in a single immersive experience. With over 100,000 attendees and the participation of more than 50 international brands, the festival set a new benchmark for family entertainment in the region. Since then, the Toy Festival expanded into a full-fledged regional franchise, with successful editions held in Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, and Oman. Beyond themed experiences, we are entering new segments such as museums, with a new company to be launched by the end of 2025 dedicated to this field. This reflects our mission to diversify our offerings and continuously innovate within the entertainment industry.

The cultural economy is becoming central to regional development. How do you see Spacetoon contributing to this trend?
Museums are a major opportunity, and our new division, set to launch in December 2025, will focus on designing and executing museums as immersive cultural spaces. This is a natural extension of our expertise in content creation and experience design. Museums can be reimagined as interactive spaces blending culture, education, and entertainment, perfectly aligning with Saudi Vision 2030's cultural goals and with regional demand for cultural tourism. This diversification further strengthens Spacetoon's positioning as a leader not only in entertainment, but in the broader cultural economy. ✖

BIO

As Commercial Director of Spacetoon TV and Founder & General Manager of Spacetoon Entertainment, Ahmad Weiss blends business strategy with creative innovation to deliver unforgettable experiences for families. With a decade of industry leadership, Weiss has shaped the entertainment landscape since beginning his career in 2014 at Arabian Licensing Company. His strategic prowess in business development at Game Power 7 and Spacetoon International led to groundbreaking partnerships with global giants. He has transformed global IPs such as PUBG Mobile, Barbie, Blippi, Mr. Bean, and many more into immersive experiences across MENA. He holds a business administration degree from the University of Wollongong.



Khouloud Ben Khalifa
GENERAL MANAGER,
ROTANA MUSIC COMPANY

BIO

Khouloud Ben Khalifa is the General Manager at Rotana Music Company, leading the largest indoor multi-purpose venue in Riyadh. Under her leadership, the venue has hosted some of the biggest global acts, iconic Riyadh Season performances, and pioneering productions, while also developing original content and formats tailored to the region's evolving audience. With a master's degree in business management from France, and as a certified venue professional from the Venue Management School US, Ben Khalifa brings a unique blend of strategic expertise, operational excellence, and creative vision to her role.

How do you elevate Saudi Arabia's presence on the global entertainment stage?

Live entertainment is no longer a luxury, but a driver of economic growth, tourism, and national identity. At Rotana, we recognized early that Saudi Arabia's journey toward becoming a global entertainment hub required more than staging shows but an ecosystem of world-class venues, advanced production capabilities, alignment with national entertainment standards, talent development, and operational excellence. Our strategy is built on three pillars: capacity, versatility, and cultural authenticity. We also form long-term alliances with global production houses, content promoters, and creative agencies. These collaborations import global expertise while allowing us to export Saudi stories. And just as importantly, we are investing in the next generation of Saudi professionals to ensure sustainable capacity building.

As 2026 approaches, what are Rotana's strategic priorities?

We are expanding our operational footprint across key cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah, enhancing venue capabilities and partnerships to deliver world-class events all year-round. These venues are not just physical spaces, but cultural touchpoints that reflect the excellence and ambition of Saudi Arabia. Equally important is our commitment to developing local talent through hands-on training, mentoring, and industry partnerships that equip professionals in venue operations, content creation, and digital storytelling. Content is another major pillar. We are focused on producing original formats that are not only compelling for local audiences, but also capable of crossing borders. We want to tell Saudi stories in ways that resonate globally, whether through scripted series, music, or live entertainment. The region is incredibly digitally fluent, and our audiences expect experiences that reflect that. All these priorities work together to move us closer to our vision of not just growing, but leading. We aim for Rotana to continue leading as a driving force in cultural innovation, not only in Saudi Arabia, but across the global entertainment landscape. ✖





SHAPING *the future*

Winner of the Best Staffing Agency award at the Middle East Event Awards 2023, eventlab is a leading staffing and recruitment solutions provider with offices in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar.

Nadim Jamal
CO-FOUNDER,
EVENTLAB

What led to the founding of eventlab in 2013?
In 2013, eventlab was born out of a vision to pioneer a new path in the Middle East for event professionals and clients alike. Recognizing a gap in the market, we introduced a focused approach to freelance recruitment in the events sector, a first of its kind both regionally and globally. While the concept of freelancing was met with skepticism, we set out to redefine it. It was challenging for freelancers to find work and for clients to find freelancers. We started from scratch, using our savings as startup capital. Our theory was that the market needed this service, and freelancers required a sense of security and support. eventlab's growth was organic and substantial, with revenue doubling each year. From having around 200 people in our database initially, we now have over 60,000 professionals. Our understanding of the industry's needs, coupled with genuine care for our freelancers, has been key to our success. We support freelancers through various career stages, help them with their CVs, and ensure timely payments, which has built trust and loyalty over the years. Our strategy of matching the perfect candidate to the right role, rather than mass recruiting, has solidified our reputation as industry leaders, especially in Saudi Arabia where our commitment to quality and ethical practices is well-recognized.

How do you plan to maintain and defend your position as market leader?
eventlab is not just maintaining, but continuously enhancing its leadership in the recruitment and staffing industry. We offer several distinct services, including recruitment and staffing. Our staffing department, which involves managing large teams of ushers, hosting staff, ticketing staff and more, set us apart as a managed service. We also provide workforce consultancy and related advisory services, often at no cost, as clients usually engage us for subsequent services. We maintain our leadership with a 95% accuracy rate in our placements during peak seasons, rising to 97% in low seasons. This consistency is a testament to our rigorous standards, even under challenging conditions. We also work with high-profile clients, including NEOM, DGCL, the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Tourism. Our involvement in significant projects such as MDLBEAST concerts, Formula One, the Jeddah Islamic Arts Biennale, and the Contemporary Arts Biennale demonstrates our capability and trustworthiness.

How is eventlab supporting Saudization initiatives?
Our commitment to Saudization is profound and strategic. By successfully placing a substantial number of Saudi nationals in key projects, we not only align with national objectives, but also foster a skilled local workforce. For example, we recently placed over 650 Saudi nationals, all above the age of 21 and with university degrees, in a project for the Riyadh season. These individuals, with a 50:50 male-to-female ratio, were employed in various capacities that required 100% Saudi workforce. Despite the tight turnaround, we successfully executed this large-scale placement, demonstrating the availability of local talent. We always prioritize a significant ratio of Saudi nationals in our placements; however, we adjust the mix according to client preferences, especially when different languages and backgrounds are needed. The key to our success lies in effectively selecting, managing, and nurturing local talent, ensuring they are well-prepared for long-term careers in the industry.

What are eventlab's plans for expanding its presence and services in Saudi Arabia?
eventlab is on an ambitious growth trajectory in Saudi Arabia. Our goal is to scale our operations to seize the opportunities that Saudi Arabia's dynamic market offers. This growth is focused on expanding our Saudi team, ensuring we can continue to deliver the high-quality service we are known for. We believe we have only just scratched the surface in Saudi Arabia. Our strategy focuses on sustained quality and strategic growth, particularly in staffing for permanent venues, entertainment, and amusement parks, and participating in upcoming mega projects. As we expand, our priority remains on maintaining the exceptional service quality that defines us, ensuring that each project we undertake is a benchmark of industry excellence. We are not just growing; we are setting new standards, nurturing local talent, and shaping the future in Saudi Arabia. ✖

BIO

Nadim Jamal is the co-founder of eventlab, the leading staffing and recruitment solutions provider in the GCC, winner of Best Staffing Agency award at the Middle East Event Awards 2023. Prior to founding eventlab, Jamal spent over a decade quickly rising through the ranks of mega-events production. With a keen insight for complex planning, he has been a project director and advisor behind numerous large-scale national and international events.



THE BIG *event*

A boutique agency, Gexpo Events has established itself as a comprehensive 360-degree solutions provider, offering a complete suite of services for all aspects of event management.

Ghada Al Rashid
CEO,
GEXPO EVENTS

Can you provide an overview of Gexpo's journey in Saudi Arabia since its inception?
Gexpo stands as a distinguished events and entertainment agency in Riyadh, propelled by a resolute vision and determination to make a mark in the dynamic events industry. Since our inception, we have witnessed remarkable growth and success in the local market. The fusion of local expertise with international standards became our winning formula, customized to meet the needs of both our clients and the country. Saudi Arabia, with its unique cultural context, presented an interesting challenge that became a focal point for an events company. Our steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional and innovative event experiences swiftly gained recognition, enabling us to expand our presence across the Saudi landscape and venture into the regional market, encompassing the UAE and other Gulf countries. Significantly, we have been entrusted with organizing numerous events for governmental entities within the Kingdom. Gexpo has established itself as the go-to partner for a wider range of events and services.

How would you position Gexpo within the local events landscape?
Gexpo's success is attributed to its agility and ability to stay abreast of market trends. Renowned as miracle workers, we have gained a reputation for pulling things off last minute, making us the preferred choice for complex projects. Dedication and consistency play a pivotal role in our achievements, and continuous learning is a core value for us. Our success is further anchored in our dedication, consistency, and meticulous attention to detail, a strength amplified by our status as a female-run company. Whether in the office, at venues, or overseeing the installation of events, I am consistently involved. This hands-on approach has been ingrained since our humble beginnings with a three-person team. Today, with 70 full-time staff and additional part-time support, we proudly position ourselves as one of the leading event agencies. I can proudly say that our work promotes the company itself.

Can you share some of the latest initiatives that you are working on?
Incorporating technology has been a focal point for us, especially in the rapidly changing landscape post-pandemic. We have delved into more intricate audio-visual and lighting setups and VR and AR technologies, which have become integral elements in the majority of our events. Our portfolio is rich with experiential and immersive events, and we leverage technology extensively for crowd management and security; however, it is not about just technology; creativity is crucial. Whenever we offer a project, we offer new concepts that resonate with the Saudi audience. Each event is uniquely tailored for the Saudi market, the response thus far has been exceptionally positive, reflecting the successful fusion of cutting-edge technology and creative innovation.

What have been the most requested requirements or targets from your clients when engaging your services?
Currently, our primary focus is on collaborating with governmental entities. We have been actively engaged in various new initiatives, and sustainability has emerged as a key consideration for many entities. Our clients also highly value agility, emphasizing the need for swift and efficient delivery. The speed and prompt execution are crucial, given the rapid pace at which the country is progressing. Notably, our proficiency extends to logistics. When we have international guests, we handle everything from booking and protocol to meet-and-greet services, stage arrivals, hotel arrangements, and transportation. During Riyadh Fashion Week, where we hosted over 500 international guests, our commitment to impeccable service was evident. Beyond the events themselves, our personalized approach extends to intercepting guests, ensuring that every aspect of their stay in Saudi Arabia is thoughtfully attended to. This shows the image of the new Saudi Arabia and provides guests with a memorable and enjoyable experience.

What is your vision for the company in the coming years?
With a solid foundation already established in Saudi Arabia, our vision is to further capitalize on the opportunities presented by Vision 2030. We aim to solidify our position here as industry innovators and creatives leaders within the country. The plan includes expanding our international footprint and enhance the sustainability initiatives because that is where Saudi and the vision is headed. Additionally, a key focus will be on cultivating talent, recognizing the significance of cultivating skilled professionals. As a company, we aspire to stay at the forefront of the industry. ✖

BIO

Ghada Al Rashid is a seasoned professional with 20 years of experience in management and operations, specializing in driving growth and profitability for businesses. She holds an MA and an MBA, showcasing her commitment to continuous learning and professional development. She has established herself as a serial entrepreneur, demonstrating a keen understanding of the business landscape. Her journey in the corporate world is marked by numerous achievements and milestones. Ghada is the Managing Partner & CEO of Gexpo, an events management company that she co-founded.



EVENT *excellence*

With a host of different services, including rentals, facility management, and furniture, OPS is one of Saudi Arabia's leading event services providers.

Fady Kreidieh
CEO,
OFF PREMISES SOLUTIONS (OPS)

Can you elaborate on OPS' core divisions?
The first is the OPS rental division, which is the foundation of our operations and includes a range of logistics for events/projects. Today, OPS provides comprehensive facility management services, primarily centered around events, although the scope has expanded to cover broader facilities. For example, we handle event logistics such as water supply, sewage, and even emergency services like electricians and plumbers. This ensures that event organizers do not have to worry about last-minute issues as we are there to manage it all. The second division is OPS production, where we focus not only on standard cabins, but specialize more in modular innovative cabins. We have worked on projects like NEOM Sports City, which includes all the buildings, toilets, and accommodations. We have also manufactured all the canteens in Six Flags, which was around 5,000sqm of modular cabins.

What key factors differentiate OPS from competitors?
Before we launched in 2019, there was essentially one dominant player in the market. Since then, we have positioned ourselves as one of the top two players in the business. While there are other competitors, especially in certain regional or local areas, we stand out when it comes to handling international events. Our standards and capabilities make us one of the only two companies that can meet the specific requirements of large-scale international events, making us a key player in the market. We want event organizers to focus on their expertise: delivering an exceptional event. We handle everything else. No matter if it is cabins, fences, towers, generators, cleaning, labor, electricians, or even furniture, we ensure that all the logistical details are managed so that our clients do not need to think about it. In 2023, we launched furniture rental and can now provide all services. Our philosophy is simple: if a client needs it, we will either rent it to them or go out and buy it for them.

How do you assess your company's capabilities and contributions to Saudi Arabia's growing entertainment industry?
We value loyalty, and our partnerships with entities such as the Ministry of Sports and the General Entertainment Authority are crucial to our success. We work closely with them to understand their long-term needs and align our assets accordingly. Our role goes beyond just providing rentals; we are deeply involved in ensuring that everything runs smoothly, especially for high-profile, high-security events. In response to changing global trends, we are also expanding our product range by sourcing internationally. For example, we recently acquired cutting-edge containerized buildings from Portugal that can be assembled and disassembled quickly. We plan to bring more of these assets into Saudi Arabia to help OPS go global while continuing to meet local demand.

What unique challenges and opportunities do you encounter when providing modular solutions for large-scale events like these?
Different clients from different parts of the world bring their own expectations and standards. When we first entered the Saudi market, containerized cabins were the norm; however, we have introduced a more flexible solution with porta cabins, which can be customized in terms of width, height, and design. This flexibility has allowed us to cater to international clients who require higher standards, such as grounding for electrical safety, which is not typically a requirement in Saudi Arabia. By adapting quickly and understanding the requirements of international clients, we have become the go-to provider for artist rooms and premium services in the Kingdom.

What are your short and medium-term targets?
We are in the process of doubling our assets once again, ensuring that we stay ahead of the demand that is expected from major events. We have a dedicated team working on launching new assets that are not only functional, but also innovative and beautiful, staying true to our reputation for high-end products. In the long term, we plan to expand our product range to meet the evolving needs of our clients and help them deliver the best possible events. The more innovative and diverse our assets, the better we can support our client's vision and the events they are planning. ✖

BIO

A visionary entrepreneur with a distinguished track record, Fady Kreidieh is the CEO of OPS. Since its founding in 2019, the company has expanded rapidly under his leadership, launching nine additional businesses across Saudi Arabia that have become leaders in the entertainment, tourism, and sports servicing sectors. Prior to founding OPS, Kreidieh was behind the tremendous growth of Rabya between 2008 and 2018.



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PROMISING *opportunities*

Since its entry into the market over 20 years ago, Warehouse of Games has become one of the largest suppliers of arcade games and rides for family entertainment centers in the Middle East.

Nabil Adil Kassim
CEO,
WAREHOUSE OF GAMES

Can you elaborate on the significance of Saudi Arabia for your regional operations?
Saudi Arabia holds substantial importance for us, accounting for approximately 65-70% of our business activities. Our engagement with the Saudi market began in 1997. Over the years, the market has seen significant growth and transformation. Historically, names like Al Hokair were prominent; however, today, Warehouse of Games is a key supplier for Seven, having secured a four-year contract and currently fulfilling the first year across three to four locations, with plans for a total of 19 locations. Recently, news of the collaboration between Qiddiya and Seven has further bolstered our business prospects. The large population of Saudi Arabia, estimated at 33-34 million, makes it a critical market for us. We have established robust strategic alliances with local companies and continue to strengthen these relationships. Looking ahead, we are optimistic about the potential for further expansion within the Kingdom.

How do you continually reinforce and consolidate your reputation in a highly competitive market?
Our manufacturers consistently align with the latest trends and innovations, which is crucial to our strategy. We actively collaborate with them in developing games tailored to our market. We are also deeply involved in the manufacturing process, seeking ways to enhance our offerings while aligning with financial constraints and budgetary considerations. This meticulous approach has refined our handling and strengthened our business growth. We prioritize personal visits and fostering strong customer relationships. Additionally, we participate in all major industry shows, including the DEAL show and the SEA show, where we are among the largest exhibitors.

What innovative products are you planning to introduce in Saudi Arabia?
Our manufacturers are at the forefront of cutting-edge technology. For example, we are collaborating with a company that is developing technology enabling 3D experiences without the need for glasses, expected to be available by the end of 2024. Many of our partners in the VR industry are investing heavily in advanced simulation technologies to ensure the motion experience is as realistic as possible. They are focusing on creating simulations where the visual experience matches physical sensations, offering a fully immersive experience. Previously, the motion felt semi-real, though with current advancements, users feel entirely part of the environment. We are committed to providing the latest innovations and products available in the market, ensuring our offerings are state-of-the-art.

What challenges do you face during your daily operations?
One of our primary concerns is the global geopolitical situation, which can disrupt shipping and logistics. For instance, transporting a container from the US now takes 57 days, complicating timely product delivery for our operators. The unpredictability of such events and the resulting economic uncertainties add to the challenges. Beyond this, we face few other obstacles. The Saudi market is currently open and competitive, with knowledgeable consumers who understand their needs and desires.

What other countries are you targeting for expansion and consolidation of your operations?
We have experienced significant success in Kuwait, which emerged as one of our top-performing markets in 2023. Similarly, Oman showed substantial business growth the previous year. While Qatar is quieter, we occasionally secure projects there. Both Kuwait and Oman are investing in the development of more malls and facilities to retain their citizens and enhance local offerings. Saudi Arabia remains our primary focus due to its large population and market potential; however, we continuously explore new niches in other markets and undertake projects in the Gulf region. The region's collective effort to boost entertainment, amusement, and tourism sectors aims to prevent outward migration and attract international visitors. Looking ahead, Syria and Lebanon present promising opportunities once regional stability is restored.

What are your main targets for 2024?
Our primary objectives for 2024 include expanding our global customer base and entering more countries in the MENA region. We aim to increase our visibility through social media and various advertising channels while enhancing direct engagement through visits. Achieving these goals is closely tied to global economic stability, and we hope for a more peaceful world to facilitate these ambitions. ✖

BIO

A veteran in the amusement industry with over 30 years of experience, Nabil Adil Kassim started his career as the international export manager for a leading US distributor. Today, he heads one of the largest distribution companies of amusement games and rides, Warehouse of Games, in the MENA region. He maintains strong relationships with vendors and suppliers, ensuring reliable sourcing of products for the company.



Mohammed Saleh Al Shethry
CEO,
MALAHI



Yousef Alghedl
CO-FOUNDER/GM,
HOUSE OF ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT

Malahi and House of Entertainment are adapting to new trends via immersive experiences, story-driven concepts, global collaborations, and frictionless, tech-enabled operations.

What trends have you observed in consumer preferences in the Saudi entertainment market, and how are you adapting to these changes?

MOHAMMED SALEH AL SHETHRY We are witnessing a significant evolution in immersive experiences, which are highly popular. However, families are increasingly seeking activities that encourage physical movement for their children. We have focused on creating a balance between immersive experiences and high-activity facilities for kids, particularly those aged five to early teens. There is a strong demand for large playgrounds with interactive, movement-based games, which are currently trending among younger children. Adults need lifestyle activities that align with their way of life, such as socializing in restaurants and coffee shops. We aim to integrate social gaming into these environments by launching new technology that facilitates easy, seamless payments for games, treating them like vending machines to reduce barriers to access.

YOUSEF ALGNEDL When we first entered the entertainment industry in Saudi Arabia, it was relatively small. Our goal was to create new events and entertainment venues inspired by international markets such as the US and UK. Initially, we participated in smaller events, such as venue and mall openings. The launch of Riyadh Season dramatically changed the landscape, revealing enormous potential. The young generation in Saudi Arabia is eager for change and new experiences, especially in Riyadh. To enter the entertainment market here, you need to bring something unique and substantial or consider focusing on smaller cities. We partner with companies from Dubai, London, and the US to bring in new experiences and innovations. We recently received the IAAPA certificate recognition for event management companies. Now, we are recognized not only locally, but also internationally. If a company in the US wants a partner in Saudi Arabia to build a venue, they can find us through this recognition. During the Vienna Expo, we received many meeting requests from places such as Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait to collaborate on events or provide equipment like screens, stages, and lights. Our team is loyal, with most members having worked with us for several years. We strive to create a positive environment for our staff because their dedication and efforts are essential to our growth. Without them, we cannot succeed.

How do you shape your competitive advantages, and how do you plan to solidify your operations?

MSAS At Malahi, we are pioneers in integrating cultural elements with global standard services. We distinguish ourselves as a culturally story-driven company. Unlike Dubai, where developments with prime locations are abundant, Saudi Arabia has been slower in encouraging mixed-use or large-scale projects due to various cultural and governmental barriers. Many key players in the market hold long-term contracts with main malls, making it difficult for new entrants to gain a foothold. One of our significant advantages is our ability to create and integrate compelling narratives with our services. This storytelling approach, combined with our partnerships with global and local intellectual properties, positions us distinctly in the market. Additionally, our innovative solutions, such as the remote and frictionless play concept, enable us to tackle industry challenges effectively. In this competitive landscape, collaboration and healthy competition are crucial. While we learn from and strive to surpass our competitors, we also share insights and innovations that benefit the industry as a whole. Our aim is to break the exclusivity of prime locations by introducing new and innovative business models, such as the remote arcade concept, which has already attracted interest from major developers like ROSHN and Riyadh Gallery. first step towards capturing a larger market share. In summary, Malahi's competitive edge lies in our unique blend of cultural storytelling, strategic global partnerships, innovative problem-solving, and a proactive approach to market challenges.

YA Our understanding of the entertainment industry at this level is greatly enhanced by our international partners. If you look at the IAAPA or any certification body for operating a theme park or large entertainment zone, only few names appear, and House of Entertainment is one of them. This indicates there is still room for others to enter the industry. No single company can handle an entire project alone. We collaborate with various companies, both large and small, for operations, safety, sound systems, lighting, and other aspects. We leverage our contacts, share knowledge, experience, and even profits. This collaborative approach helps us reshape the industry and ensures we are well-positioned to take on new challenges and opportunities. ✖

EVENTS

Vision 2030 is revolutionizing the country's events industry, bringing about innovations in technology that are adapted to the local market.



Wafi Alqahtani
CEO,
MUFEED



Roni El Haddad
CEO,
COSMOS EVENTS



Ahmad Khashan
GENERAL MANAGER,
AK EVENTS KSA

THE EVENTS LANDSCAPE in Saudi Arabia has always been a significant sector, but since the announcement of Vision 2030, we have witnessed an unprecedented surge in event management activities and the associated supply chain. This surge has presented numerous opportunities across various segments, including event production, lighting and AV, registration systems, security, and various aspects of the supply chain. Currently, we find ourselves amidst an unexpected boom, with abundant opportunities emerging in inventory management and supply chain operations. As a leading player in our field, we specialize in organizing diverse multimedia events at heritage sites. One significant milestone was our pioneering use of video mapping at Qasr al-Fareed in AlUla, making us the first local company to do so. Our efforts have been recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, particularly for the show we organized in 2017, which garnered acclaim and was attended by delegates from 55 Islamic countries. This event was marked by groundbreaking video mapping on both the floor and backdrop, setting a new standard and earning us prestigious awards. Our strategic roadmap extends until 2034, with a concerted focus on the Saudi market and the GCC. By concentrating our efforts within these regions, we aim to capitalize on emerging opportunities while fostering sustainable growth and impactful partnerships that resonate with the overarching objectives of Vision 2030.

COSMOS EVENTS specializes in delivering top-notch event management services and has established itself as a trusted partner for both local and international clients. Throughout our journey, Cosmos Events has successfully organized and managed a wide array of large-scale events, including corporate conferences, exhibitions, cultural festivals, and entertainment shows. Partnerships with esteemed entities such as Turk Expo, Thailand Mega Fair, Highlander for sports events, and Hotel Interiors Experience (HIX) Event have provided us with opportunities to showcase our capabilities and deliver exceptional events that resonate with our clients' brand values. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of influencing others to invest in similar event concepts, thereby promoting the nation's products in Saudi Arabia and the broader region. Notably, our collaboration with AlUla entity underscores our position as a local operator armed with unparalleled market insights, facilitating the seamless execution of large-scale events in the region. Our commitment to client satisfaction permeates every aspect of our work. This dedication not only fosters repeat business, but also cultivates a positive image of Saudi Arabia as an attractive destination for international investors and influencers alike. Looking ahead, we are excited about the prospect of furthering our partnerships with international brands and contributing to the growth and diversification of the industry.

VISION 2030 seeks to diversify the nation's economy and elevate its tourism sector, presenting a plethora of opportunities for the events industry. These opportunities span the establishment of new event venues, amplified government backing for cultural and entertainment events, and a burgeoning demand for unparalleled experiences; however, amidst this landscape of opportunity, challenges persist. Professional resources remain limited, and constraints on event venues and logistics pose ongoing hurdles. Furthermore, the occasional delays in obtaining permits for special governmental or private venues can impede the progress of our personnel. Positioning and competition are critical for AK Events in distinguishing ourselves from competitors and ensuring the delivery of successful, unique experiences. We consistently prioritize leveraging our strengths and resources to provide exceptional value to our clients, offering a wide range of services, including event planning, coordination, and production. Our out-of-the box execution is designed to satisfy our clients, leaving a lasting impression on those who experience our services. Furthermore, we actively cultivate strong relationships and partnerships with vendors, suppliers, and venues, granting us access to exclusive resources, favorable negotiation terms and the ability to deliver high-quality experiences. Consequently, AK Events has positioned itself as the trusted and preferred choice for our target audience.



Nada Altuwaijri
CO-FOUNDER, CEO & BOARD MEMBER, MERWAS

BIO

As the co-founder, CEO, and board director of Merwas, Nada Altuwaijri has been instrumental in shaping the creative landscape of the region. Before joining Merwas, she held prominent roles at Edelman, the world's leading public relations agency; the Saudi Ministry of Media; and the MiSK Foundation. Altuwaijri began her career as a journalist at Al Arabiya, the largest Arab and international news media company in the MENA region. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Kingston University, London, and a master's degree in peace studies and conflict resolution from the University of Westminster.

What are the major opportunities and challenges for Merwas in the Saudi market?

Our approach to the academy prioritizes addressing market gaps rather than focusing solely on instrumental teaching. Through intensive gap analysis, we identified a significant lack of technical expertise in the industry, and our curated curriculums and courses aim to bridge this gap effectively. Teaching such technicalities yields three main outcomes: contributing to the Kingdom's economy, creating job opportunities, and fostering the evolution of the industry. Delving into the record label aspect, our business plan revealed a shortage of labels capable of nurturing the abundant talent pool across the Kingdom, spanning from Riyadh to Jeddah and beyond.

What have been some of Merwas' accomplishments or milestones over the past year?

In our first year, we were operating at only 40% capacity, which gave us room to test the market. Instead of activating all the subsidiaries at once, we were phasing it out. We started with these studios to test them out and test the appetite of clients before determining where demand stood lies. Further down the line, we activated the workshops and the academy, with certain areas yet to be activated.

Is Merwas actively looking for new partnerships and collaborations?

Our partnership strategy is multifaceted and tailored to various segments within the industry. Some partnerships, like our collaboration with the Saudi Arabia Intellectual Property Authority (SAIP), focus solely on infrastructure enhancement. We aim to play a significant role in activating collection management offices and investing in the entire IP cycle, aligning closely with industry development goals. Other partnerships are strategic in nature, such as our alliance with Rotana. Here, the objective is to collaborate and provide their top-tier artists access to our world-class recording studios, fostering mutual benefit and elevating industry standards. Additionally, our MoU with Quality of Life, set to launch in mid-2024, underscores our commitment to enhancing citizens' lives. Recognizing the importance of entertainment in quality of life, we offer various initiatives, including activations and workshops, to enrich the cultural landscape. Our partnership with the Music Commission, a significant player under the Ministry of Culture, is strategic. Looking ahead, we remain open to further partnerships with entities that share our vision and mandate. Synergy and alignment of objectives are the key criteria guiding our collaboration decisions. ✖



Image: FZAL KHAN MAHEEN


CONSTANTINE KSA
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CONSTANTINE KSA
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Elevating Fine Art Logistics and Cultural Services in Saudi Arabia
www.constantineksa.com

Constantine KSA is a leader in fine art logistics and cultural consultancy in Saudi Arabia, combining over a century of heritage from its UK parent company with a commitment to supporting Vision 2030. Founded in the Kingdom in 2018, the company offers advanced transportation and conservation services, including state-of-the-art storage facilities, crate construction, packing, installation, fine art insurance and the Kingdom's first dedicated art logistics fleet.







Constantine KSA's arts consultancy arm, Constant Art, brings over **30 years** of international and regional expertise in cultural strategy, creative economy development, and project delivery. Together they provide a seamless end-to-end service from concept to installation.

Paul Williamson
CEO

"We have built a fine art logistics platform fully integrated with the Kingdom's evolving cultural landscape. We are not here to simply do business; we aim to build lasting value, grounded in trust, professionalism, and shared ambition. Our expertise reflects our commitment to Saudi Arabia's growing arts and cultural ecosystem."


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