



UN Tourism

TOURISM DOING BUSINESS
INVESTING IN





Copyright © 2025, World Tourism Organization

Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Saudi Arabia

ISBN, printed version: 978-92-844-2724-6

ISBN, electronic version: 978-92-844-2725-3

DOI: 10.18111/9789284427253

Published by the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), Madrid, Spain.

First published: 2025

All rights reserved.

World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism)

C/ Poeta Joan Maragall, 42

28020 Madrid, Spain

Tel.: (+34) 915 67 81 00

Website: www.untourism.int

E-mail: info@untourism.int

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinions whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The World Tourism Organization does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Tourism Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The report/results do not constitute any form of advice, recommendation, representation or endorsement and are not intended to be relied on in making (or refraining from making) any specific investment or other decisions.

Citation:

World Tourism Organization (2025), Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Saudi Arabia, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284427253>.

All World Tourism Organization publications are protected by copyright. Therefore, and unless otherwise specified, no part of a World Tourism Organization publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm, scanning, without prior permission in writing. The World Tourism Organization encourages dissemination of its work and is pleased to consider permissions, licensing, and translation requests related to its publications.

Permission to photocopy material of the World Tourism Organization in Spain must be obtained through:

Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos (CEDRO)

Calle Alcalá, 21, 2º der.

28014 Madrid, Spain

Tel.: (+34) 913 08 63 30

Website: www.cedro.org

E-mail: cedro@cedro.org

For authorization of the reproduction of works from the World Tourism Organization outside of Spain, please contact one of CEDRO's partner organizations, with which bilateral agreements are in place (see: www.cedro.org/english?lng=en).

For all remaining countries as well as for other permissions, requests should be addressed directly to the World Tourism Organization.

For applications see: <https://www.untourism.int/un-tourism-publications>

TOURISM DOING BUSINESS INVESTING IN



Acknowledgments:

Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Saudi Arabia was developed and prepared by Juan Antonio Gómez García, Senior Project Specialist at the Innovation, Education and Investments Department, under the supervision of Antonio López de Ávila, Director of Innovation, Education and Investment, and Natalia Bayona, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Regional Department for the Middle East, Samer I. Al-Kharashi, Director of the Regional Office for the Middle East, and Sandra Carvão, Director of the Market Intelligence and Competitiveness Department.

The Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia team was led by Deema Almudaheem, Director of Investment Initiatives, and supported by Mohammed Al-Ajmi, Nasser Al Mazrou, Aisha Al Bgumi from Investment Environment General Department. With substantial contributions from the teams at Tourism Destination Development & Planning, Data & Decision Support, Marketing, Human Capital Development, Licensing and Strategy.

We are grateful for the work carried out by the Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in preparing the information that served as basis for this publication, as well as in reviewing the design and content, and to the other ministries and institutions in Saudi Arabia for their collaboration.

The design, infographics and typesetting were done by Javier Valiente.



H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb

Minister of Tourism,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



“**Saudi Arabia** is unlocking one of the world’s most dynamic tourism markets. With unmatched opportunities, world-class infrastructure, and streamlined investor pathways, we are building the most attractive destination for global tourism investment.”

H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb.





Zurab Pololikashvili

UN TOURISM SECRETARY-GENERAL



Tourism is one of the most influential forces shaping economies and societies. It generates opportunities, builds bridges between nations, and drives progress through the movement of people and ideas. As governments and investors seek to diversify and strengthen their economies, tourism stands out as a sector of choice — a sector that unites growth, culture, and global connections.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has embraced this reality with clarity and ambition. Under the framework of Vision 2030, tourism has been placed at the centre of a broad national transformation, opening new pathways for diversification and investment. This commitment is not only redefining the country's economy but also reshaping the global tourism landscape. Today, Saudi Arabia is a leader, offering a model of how vision, determination, and investment can come together to unlock the potential of tourism for the benefit of all.

For UN Tourism, the partnership with Saudi Arabia holds special meaning. The decision to establish our first Regional Office in Riyadh stands as a milestone in the history of our Organization. From this base, we work hand-in-hand with the Kingdom to promote innovation, education, and investment among other areas, and to serve as a platform for cooperation across the Middle East and beyond. Saudi Arabia's support has allowed UN Tourism to strengthen its global presence and to bring our programmes closer to Member States, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are more widely shared.

The Kingdom has also become an important voice in international tourism dialogue. Through close collaboration with UN Tourism, Saudi Arabia has played an active role in advancing initiatives that expand opportunities for investment, empower young people, and promote innovation. This engagement underscores the country's position as not only a destination of choice but also as a partner in shaping the global agenda for tourism's future.

It is within this context that I am honoured to introduce *Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Saudi Arabia*. This publication reflects the Kingdom's unique strengths as a destination and as an investment hub. It sets out the frameworks, programmes, and opportunities that together create one of the most attractive environments for tourism investment in the world. More importantly, it offers a vision of how the country's leadership and commitment are paving the way for long-term partnerships that will deliver benefits for both investors and society.

UN Tourism is proud to stand alongside Saudi Arabia in this journey. With these Guidelines, we invite the international investment community to explore the opportunities presented and to take part in shaping the future of tourism in the Kingdom. The road ahead is one of promise and ambition, and Saudi Arabia is ready to welcome the world to be part of it.

Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary General
UN Tourism



Red Sea

INTRODUCTION	16
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	20
1. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK	22
1.1. Global Macroeconomic Context	23
1.2. Economic Overview of Saudi Arabia	24
2. INVESTMENTS OUTLOOK	32
2.1. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Trends	36
2.2. Investment Trends in Tourism	42
2.3. Investment in Innovation and Startup Ecosystem	50
3. COMPETITIVE OUTLOOK	52
3.1. Tourism Sector Overview	57
3.2. Tourism Training and Development Efforts	72
3.3. Investment Environment Reforms	76
4. WHY INVEST IN SAUDI ARABIA	84
4.1. Diverse Geography, Youthful Population and Rich Tourism Offering	86
4.2. Location, Connectivity, and World-Class Infrastructure	108
4.3. Transformative Projects and Events Redefining Tourism	117
4.4. Government Support and Vision for Growth	130
4.5. Supportive Financial Sector & Enabling Investment Ecosystem	136
5. INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	144
6. HOW TO INVEST IN SAUDI ARABIA	158
7. CONCLUSION	164
REFERENCES	166



Red Sea

ACRONYMS

ACP	Air Connectivity Programme	NTS	National Tourism Strategy
ADS	Approved Destination Status	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
BIT	Bilateral investment treaty	PIF	Public Investment Fund
CAGR	Compound annual growth rate	RQI	Road Quality Index
CAPEX	Capital expenditure	SAR	Saudi Arabian Riyal
COC	Chamber of commerce	SBC	Saudi Business Center
DTA	Double tax agreements	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
FDI	Foreign direct investment	SEZ	Special economic zones
GASTAT	General Authority for Statistics	SME	Small and medium enterprises
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council	STA	Saudi Tourism Authority
GDP	Gross domestic product	TDF	Tourism Development Fund
GOSI	General Organization for Social Insurance	TIEP	Tourism Investment Enablers Program
HRDF	Human Resources Development Fund	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa	VAT	Value added tax
MHRSD	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development	VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
MICE	Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions	WEO	World economic outlook
MISA	Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia	WTO	World Trade Organization
MSMEs	Micro, small, and medium enterprises	ZATCA	The Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority
NIS	National Investment Strategy		

FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth, 2015-2027f

Figure 1.2. Saudi Arabia GDP Growth Projections (%)

Figure 1.3. Contribution to the GDP by Economic Activity (current prices), 2023

Figure 1.4. Direct Contribution of Tourism to GDP (% and USD billion), 2019-2023

Figure 2.1. Total Investment as % of GDP, G20 countries, 2024

Figure 2.2 FDI inflows evolution in Saudi Arabia, 2019-2024

Figure 2.3. FDI inflows by sector, 2024 (USD million)

Figure 2.4 Top Origin of FDI inflows (%), 2024

Figure 2.5. Tourism Greenfield Investment Projects in G20 economies, by announced projects, 2019-2024

Figure 2.6 Hotel pipeline 2025-2034

Figure 3.1. International Tourist Arrivals and Spending, 2015-2024

Figure 3.2. Tourist Arrivals per origin market (thousands), 2024

Figure 3.3. Main Purpose of Trip of International Tourist Arrivals, 2024

Figure 3.4. Seasonality of International Tourist Arrivals, 2024

Figure 3.5. Average Length of Stay (nights), 2022-2024

Figure 3.6. Type of Preferred Accommodation, 2024

Figure 4.1. Map of Saudi Arabia regions and destinations

Figure 4.2. TDF's Core Financial Products

TABLES

Table 3.1 Employment-linked diploma programs

Table 3.2 Diploma programs

Table 6.1 Key Tourism Supply Categories



INTRODUCTION

Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Saudi Arabia highlights the Kingdom’s key strengths and strategic advantages that make it one of the most promising tourism investment destinations globally. Saudi Arabia offers a rich and untapped tourism landscape, backed by **Vision 2030**. The Kingdom has implemented sweeping reforms, fostering a competitive, investor-friendly environment through regulatory streamlining, tax incentives, and a strong institutional framework. From simplified licensing to sector-specific financing and flagship mega-projects, Saudi Arabia offers a well-supported pathway for tourism investment — reinforced by legal transparency, modern digital platforms, and a long-term commitment to private sector growth.

Chapter one explores Saudi Arabia’s economic environment against the backdrop of global and regional trends. The IMF projects global GDP growth at **2.8% in 2025**, while the Middle East is expected to grow by **2.0%**, rising to **3.1% in 2026**. Saudi Arabia, under **Vision 2030**, aims to capitalise on this regional momentum by reducing its reliance on hydrocarbons and strengthening non-oil sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, finance, and logistics. Following an estimated **1.8% GDP growth in 2024**, the Ministry of Finance forecasts **4.6% growth in 2025**, supported by investment-led expansion and private sector participation. International institutions echo this outlook, with the IMF projecting **3.0%** and the World Bank **2.8%**. The Kingdom’s stable “A+” sovereign rating and declining unemployment—**6.3% for Saudi nationals in Q1 2025**¹—underscore macroeconomic resilience. Tourism has emerged as a key growth driver, with its direct GDP contribution rising to **4.4% in 2023**, and over **966,531 jobs** supported in 2024. Inflation rose moderately to **2.1% in Q1 2025**, mainly due to higher housing and utility costs.

Note: 2019- 2022 values are not updated in accordance with the new GDP baseline. Please note that the published figures allow for calculating % contribution of each sector to GVA, not GDP, since Net Taxes on Products are reported as a total amount and not broken down by activity.

Chapter two outlines Saudi Arabia's growing appeal as an investment destination under Vision 2030, with FDI inflows reaching **USD 31.8 billion** in 2024. While the bulk of investment remains concentrated in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and construction, tourism is gaining momentum. Between 2019 and 2024, Saudi Arabia attracted **56 tourism-related greenfield projects worth USD 1.9 billion**, ranking among the leading recipients among G20 economies. Foreign investment has been led by China, while domestic capital—especially through the **Public Investment Fund and Tourism Development Fund**—continues to drive large-scale destination development. Alongside large-scale public initiatives, private investors are positioning the Kingdom as one of the fastest-expanding hotel markets globally.

Chapter three outlines Saudi Arabia's rising international competitiveness and tourism performance, with top G20 rankings in entrepreneurship, digital services, and infrastructure. The Kingdom welcomed **29.7 million international tourists in 2024**, a 70% increase over 2019, with receipts of **USD 44.9 billion²**, reflecting strong growth across both religious and non-religious segments. Visa reforms and improved connectivity have broadened source markets, while evolving patterns in seasonality and length of stay point to a maturing tourism profile. At the same time, **domestic tourist arrivals reached 86.2 million** in 2024, generating **USD 30.7 billion** in spending, further reinforcing the sector's foundation. Employment in tourism climbed to **966,531 jobs**, with a growing share held by Saudi nationals. With non-religious tourism now accounting for more than 58% of total arrivals, the Kingdom is strengthening its global visibility and positioning itself as a competitive year-round destination.

Chapter four outlines **five key reasons** to invest in tourism in Saudi Arabia. First, the country's **diverse geography and rich cultural heritage**, with over **3,000 km of coastline**, **1,450 islands**, and **8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, offers year-round and varied tourism experiences. Second, its **strategic location and world-class infrastructure** — including **29 airports** and a rapidly expanding rail network — ensure strong global connectivity. Third, there is **strong government support** through Vision 2030, aiming for **150 million annual visits** and tourism contributing **10% to GDP** by 2030. Fourth, a **robust investment ecosystem** led by the **Tourism Development Fund** and the **Public Investment Fund** provides financing tools for projects of all scales. Finally, **transformative giga-projects** like **NEOM**, **The Red Sea Project**, and **Diriyah** are redefining tourism with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and luxury — creating vast opportunities for investors.

Chapter five outlines the key investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, driven by large-scale infrastructure development, rising visitor numbers, and diversification efforts Vision 2030. It highlights potential in hospitality, heritage tourism, ecotourism, and integrated tourism complexes, supported by government incentives and public-private partnerships.

Finally, **chapter six** outlines the **step-by-step process to invest in Saudi Arabia**, highlighting the country's streamlined procedures and digital platforms. Investors—local and foreign—follow a structured pathway from **trade name reservation** and **commercial registration** to obtaining all required **permits and operating licences**. Key government entities like the **Ministry of Investment**, **Ministry of Commerce**, and **Ministry of Tourism** oversee each stage, with foreign investors requiring an **investment licence** and additional approvals. The process reflects Saudi Arabia's commitment to reducing red tape and facilitating **efficient market entry** into its growing tourism sector.





KEY REASONS TO INVEST IN



1

Diverse Geography, Youthful Population and Rich Tourism Offering

With a landmass exceeding 2 million km², Saudi Arabia offers a remarkable diversity of natural and cultural assets, ranging from 3,000 km of coastline and 1,450 islands to volcanic highlands, wadis, and vast deserts. The Kingdom is home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 2 biosphere reserves, and 16 elements of intangible cultural heritage, many still untapped, providing solid foundations for tourism across heritage, adventure, wellness, and nature-based segments. Its demographic profile is equally significant: 72.8% of the population is of working age, with 63% of Saudis under 30 and a median age of 29, markedly younger than in other major FDI destinations and offering a vibrant, future-oriented talent pool.

2

Location, Connectivity, and World-Class Infrastructure

Situated within a 7-hour flight of more than 50% of the world's population, Saudi Arabia benefits from global proximity and continued investment in connectivity. In 2024, its 29 airports handled 128 million passengers, while road infrastructure spans over 73,000 km. Urban mobility is also advancing, with projects like the Riyadh Metro (176 km across 6 lines) set to serve up to 3 million passengers per day, easing access across the capital and reinforcing the infrastructure backbone of a growing tourism economy.

3

Transformative Projects and Events Redefining Tourism

Giga-projects such as NEOM, The Red Sea, AMAALA, Diriyah, and AIUla are redefining Saudi Arabia's tourism model. These state-backed, master-planned developments integrate sustainability, technology, and cultural heritage to create globally competitive destinations. Collectively, they are expected to contribute over USD 40 billion in GDP and attract millions of visitors annually, offering long-term opportunities in hospitality, infrastructure, creative industries, and services.

4

Government Support and Vision for Growth

Tourism plays a central role in Vision 2030, with targets of 150 million visits, 1.6 million jobs, and a 10% share of GDP by 2030. This agenda is driven by the National Tourism Strategy and supported by a dedicated institutional framework that includes the Ministry of Tourism, Saudi Tourism Authority, and Tourism Development Fund, providing regulatory clarity, streamlined licensing, and coordinated public-private engagement to de-risk and accelerate investment. These efforts are underpinned by Saudi Arabia's strong banking and financial sector, high sovereign credit ratings, and substantial foreign reserves managed by the Saudi Central Bank, which together enhance investor confidence and provide a stable foundation for long-term tourism growth.

5

Supportive Financial Sector & Enabling Investment Ecosystem

Saudi Arabia's financial environment is anchored by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), with assets under management worth over USD 925 billion, and a dedicated Tourism Development Fund with USD 4 billion in capital. Investors benefit from instruments including loans, equity, and guarantees starting from USD 4 million, while MSMEs are supported through tailored programmes with entry points as low as USD 2,667. The 2024 Tourism Investment Enabler Program aims to unlock USD 11 billion in private capital and enable the development of 42,000 new hotel rooms.

Riyadh



1

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

1.1. Global Macroeconomic Context

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its *World Economic Outlook* (April 2025), projects global GDP growth at **2.8% in 2025** and **3.0% in 2026**³, reflecting downward revisions of **0.5 and 0.3 percentage points**, respectively, compared to the *WEO Update* of January 2025⁴. The revisions are primarily attributed to the intensification of global trade tensions and sustained policy uncertainty, which are expected to constrain investment and dampen overall economic activity.

Growth forecasts for **advanced economies** have been revised downward by **0.5 percentage points**, with output now projected to expand by **1.4% in 2025**. Similarly, projections for **emerging markets and developing economies** have been adjusted to **3.7% in 2025**, also representing a decline of **0.5 percentage points** relative to previous forecasts.

In the **Middle East**, real GDP is projected to grow by **2.0% in 2025**, accelerating to **3.1% in 2026**⁵. The region's medium-term performance is supported by a gradual recovery in non-oil sectors, sustained public investment, and ongoing efforts towards economic diversification. Nonetheless, the outlook remains sensitive to fluctuations in commodity prices, regional geopolitical dynamics, and the pace of structural reforms across economies.

In regard to **inflation**, the IMF anticipates a gradual moderation, with global inflation projected to decline from **4.3% in 2025** to **3.6% in 2026**⁶. In advanced economies, inflation is expected to ease from **2.5% to 2.2%** over the same period. Despite this downward trajectory, price levels remain elevated relative to pre-November 2024 figures, reflecting the enduring impact of geopolitical tensions, tariff measures, and subdued global growth.



Herd of Arabian Oryx, Baidah Wildlife Reserve

1.2. Economic Overview of Saudi Arabia

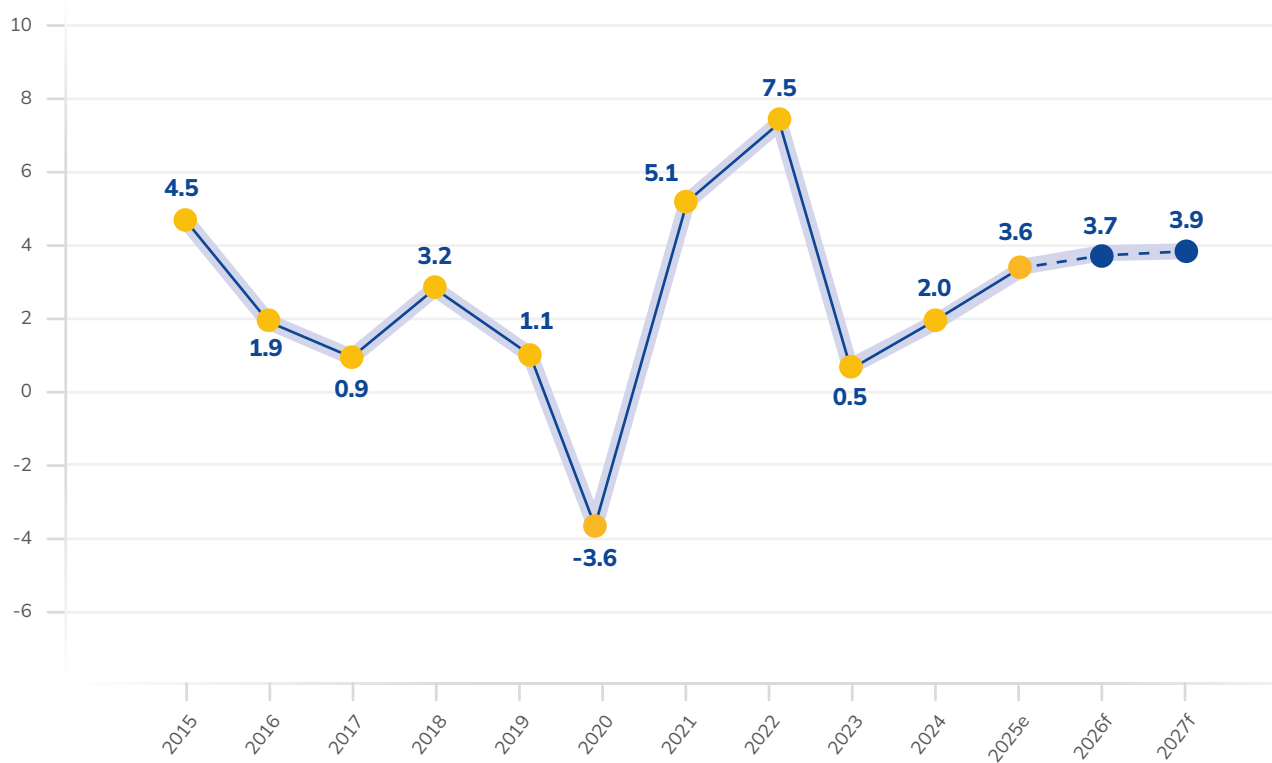
Over the past decade, Saudi Arabia's economic performance has reflected the combined impact of oil market cycles, global disruptions, and domestic policy shifts. Between 2015 and 2024, annual real GDP growth averaged approximately **2.1%**, with notable fluctuations around this trend. Following a contraction of **-3.6% in 2020** due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global collapse in energy demand, the economy rebounded sharply in 2021 (**5.1%**) and 2022 (**7.5%**), g. Growth then moderated to **0.5% in 2023** and an estimated **2.0% in 2024**⁷, influenced by oil production adjustments and a more challenging external environment.

Saudi Arabia's economic growth is expected to regain momentum over the medium term, supported by strong performance in non-oil sectors and the continued implementation of structural reforms. The Ministry of Finance forecasts GDP growth of **4.6% in 2025** and **3.5% in 2026**⁸, driven by investment-led expansion and higher private sector contribution.

International institutions reflect this outlook with varying degrees of caution. **The IMF projects growth at 3.6% in 2025 and 3.9% in 2026**⁹, while the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates 3.8% and 3.6%¹⁰, respectively. The World Bank anticipates a more moderate 2.8% in 2025, followed by a stronger recovery to 4.5% in 2026.¹¹ The IMF's downward revision from its January 2025 figures is attributed to increased global uncertainty and the rising impact of trade restrictions.

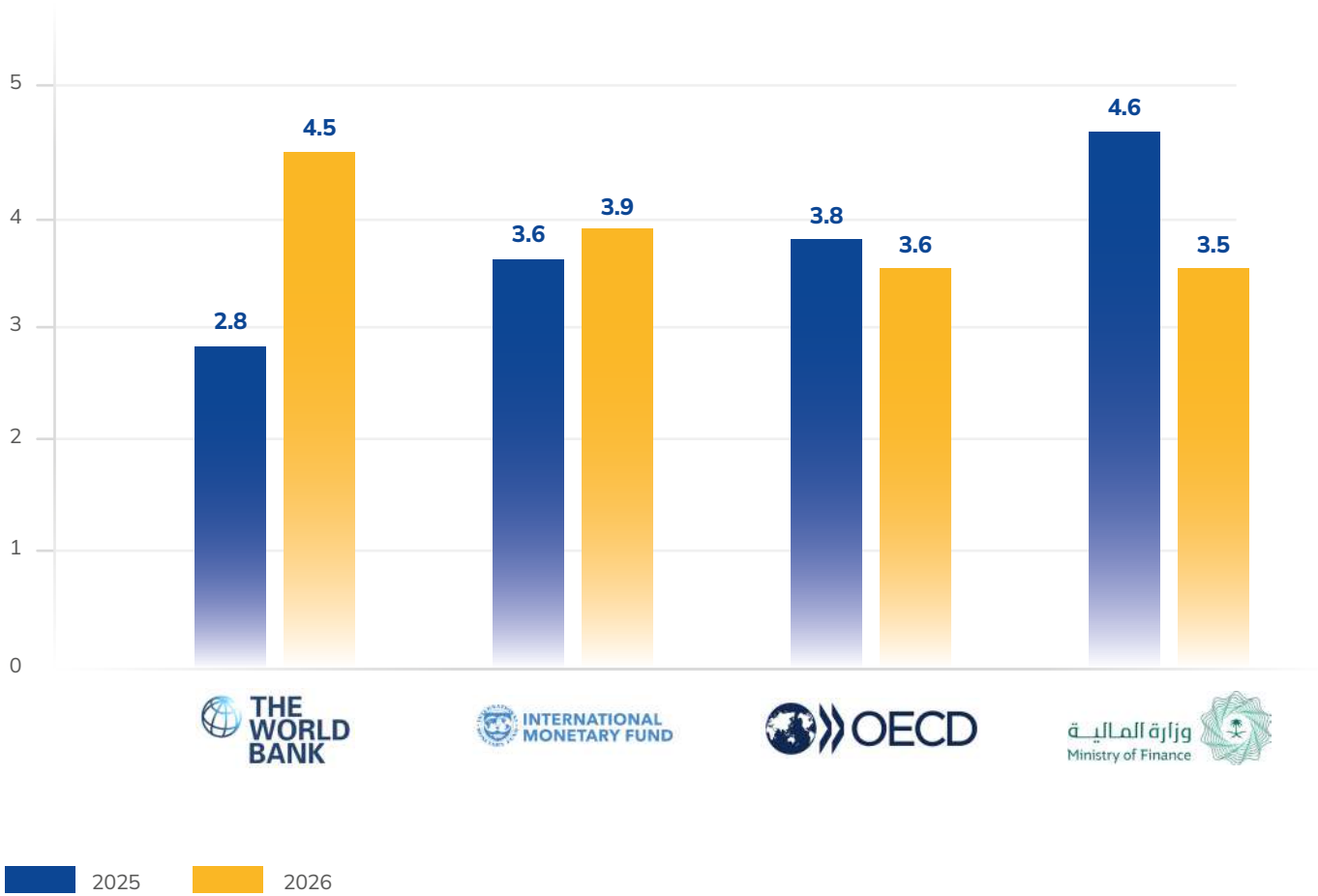
Despite current external pressures, the alignment across institutional forecasts confirms a broadly positive trajectory, underpinned by domestic policy consistency and ongoing structural adjustment.



Figure 1.1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth, 2015-2027f**Source:**

International Monetary Fund (2025), World Economic Outlook Update, July 2025 Edition, IMF, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [01-10-2025].

Figure 1.2. Saudi Arabia GDP Growth Projections (%)



Saudi Arabia's sovereign credit profile has remained stable. Both **Standard & Poor's** (March 2025)¹² and **Fitch Ratings** (February 2025)¹³ reaffirmed the Kingdom's "A+" rating with a **stable outlook**, highlighting progress in fiscal consolidation and the strengthening of macroeconomic buffers. These assessments reflect continued confidence in the country's capacity to navigate external shocks while advancing its long-term development objectives.

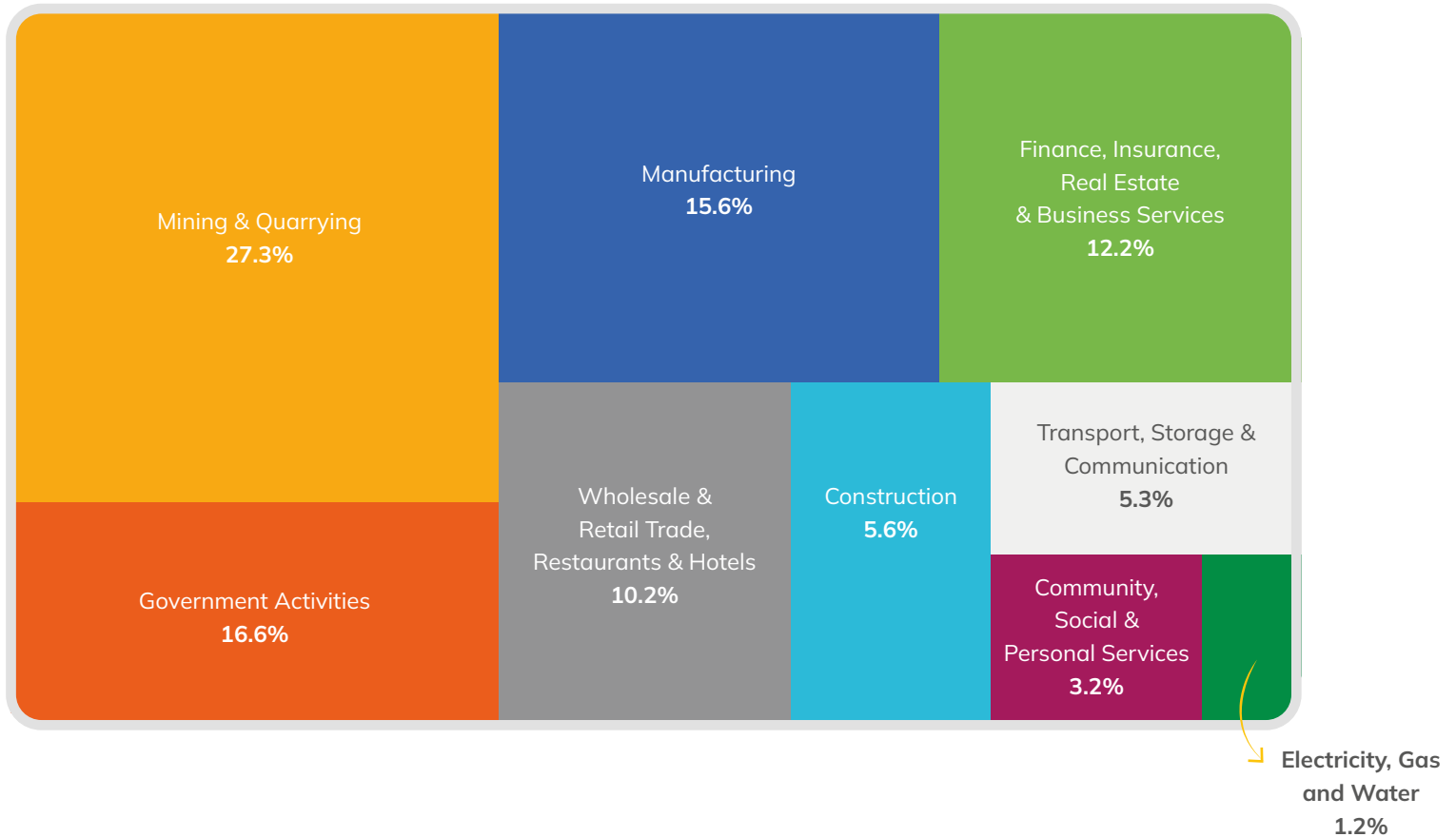
Saudi Arabia's labour market continues to improve in 2025, reflecting broader economic recovery and structural reforms. In **Q1 2025**, the **unemployment rate for Saudi nationals** fell to **6.3%**,¹⁴ reaching the Vision 2030 target ahead of schedule. This marked a drop of **0.7 percentage points** compared to the previous quarter. The **overall unemployment rate** declined to **2.8%**, and the latest available data shows an increase in the employment-to-population ratio for Saudis of 0.5 percentage points compared to the fourth quarter of 2024, reaching 48.0%.¹⁵ These shifts point to rising labour demand, particularly in non-oil sectors, and continued progress in nationalisation efforts across the economy.

Saudi Arabia's economic structure reflects a progressive shift from hydrocarbon dependence toward a more diversified base, in line with the objectives of **Vision 2030**. The evolution of sectoral contributions over the past decade highlights this transition. The economy remains anchored in **primary activities**, notably **mining and quarrying**, which includes oil and natural gas extraction and remains the single largest contributor to GDP. However, the growing weight of **secondary and tertiary sectors**—such as manufacturing, finance, and services—signals an ongoing rebalancing toward a more broad-based economic model.

In **2023**, the **mining and quarrying** sector accounted for **27.3% of GDP**, a notable reduction from **31.5% in 2018**¹⁶, reflecting both oil production adjustments and the broader policy objective of reducing hydrocarbon dependency. **Manufacturing** contributed **15.6%**, consolidating its position as a core pillar of the non-oil economy, supported by investment in industrial zones and supply chain localisation. Among tertiary sectors, **finance, insurance, real estate and business services** represented **12.2%**¹⁷, showing steady growth since 2018. **Wholesale and retail trade** stood at **10.2%**, benefitting from demographic growth and consumer demand recovery, while **government activities**—which expanded during the pandemic—stabilised at **16.6%** in 2023.



Figure 1.3. Contribution to the GDP by Economic Activity (current prices), 2023



Source: General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025]

Note: for further information on economic activities definition please visit <https://www.stats.gov.sa/>



The **construction sector**, at **5.6%**, remains critical to Vision 2030 delivery, supporting megaproject development and infrastructure expansion. Other sectors such as **transport and communication (5.3%)** and **agriculture (2.9%)** have maintained consistent contributions. The **electricity, gas and water** sector, related to utilities and distribution, accounted for **1.2%**, showing limited year-on-year variation.¹⁸

While the oil and gas sector continues to play a dominant role, the data confirms a gradual diversification of the economy. Non-oil activities are expanding their footprint, supported by public investment, regulatory reforms, and efforts to stimulate private sector participation.

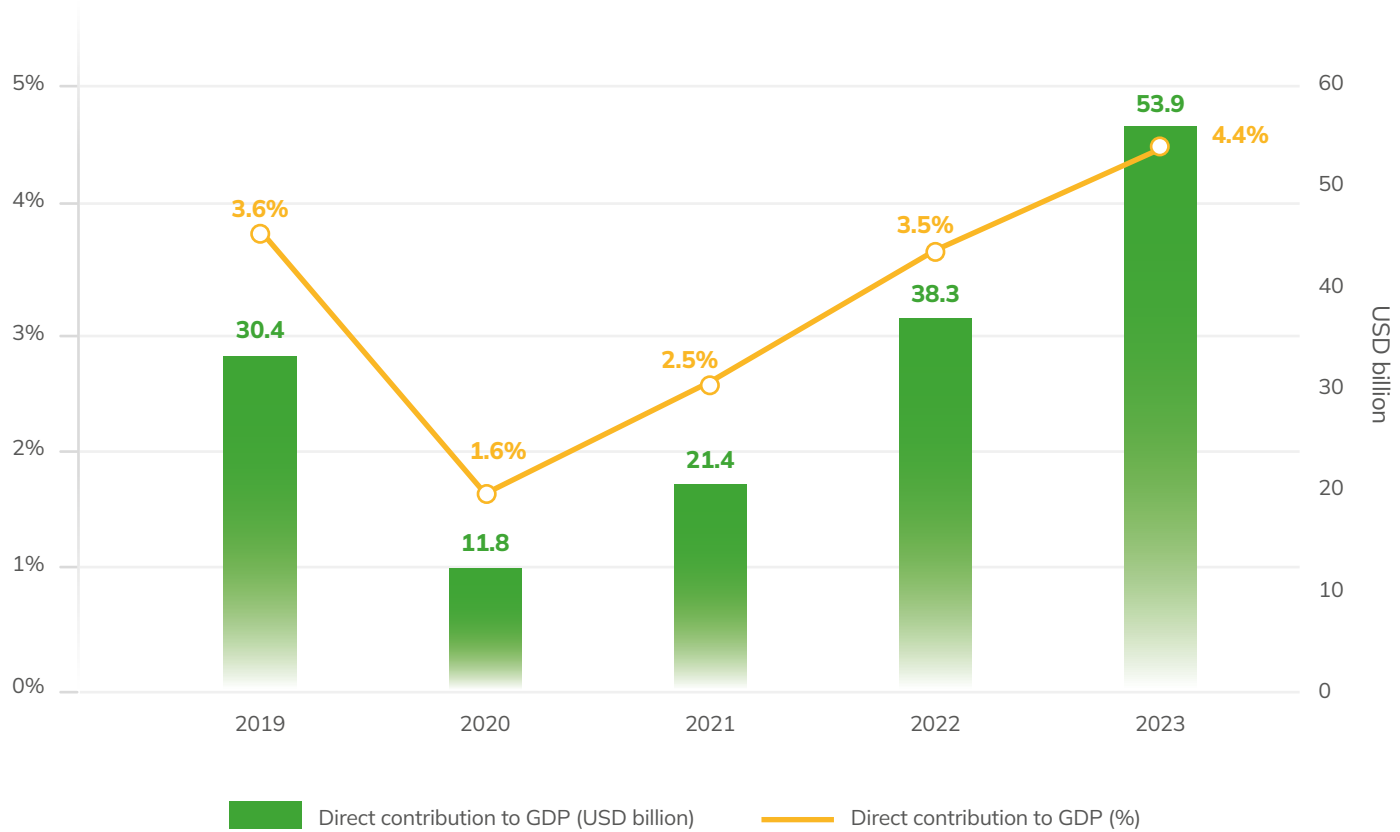
Tourism has emerged as a key pillar in Saudi Arabia's economic diversification strategy, with increasing weight in GDP, employment, and investment flows. Over the past five years, the sector has transitioned from a largely religious-driven segment to a broader economic activity supported by infrastructure development, regulatory reforms, and targeted policy measures. As part of the Kingdom's Vision

2030 objectives, tourism is now positioned as a strategic growth sector, with measurable macroeconomic impact.

The **direct contribution of tourism to GDP** increased from **1.6% in 2020 to 4.4% in 2023**, exceeding its 2019 pre-pandemic level of **3.6%**.¹⁹ In absolute terms, the sector's GDP contribution rose from **USD 11.8 billion in 2020 to USD 53.9 billion in 2023**²⁰, representing a **more than fourfold rise** in just three years. This expansion has been driven by both the recovery of religious travel and the rapid growth of domestic and international leisure and MICE segments.

Employment figures reflect the same trajectory. In **2024**, tourism directly supported **966,531 jobs (837,972 male workers and 128,559 female workers)**²¹, highlighting its growing role in labour market diversification and its contribution to service sector expansion. The upward trend in both output and employment confirms tourism's relevance as a structural component of the national economy.

Figure 1.4. Direct Contribution of Tourism to GDP (% and USD billion), 2019-2023



Source: General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].

Note: 2019- 2022 Direct GDP values are not updated in accordance with the new GDP baseline.



King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra), Dhahran



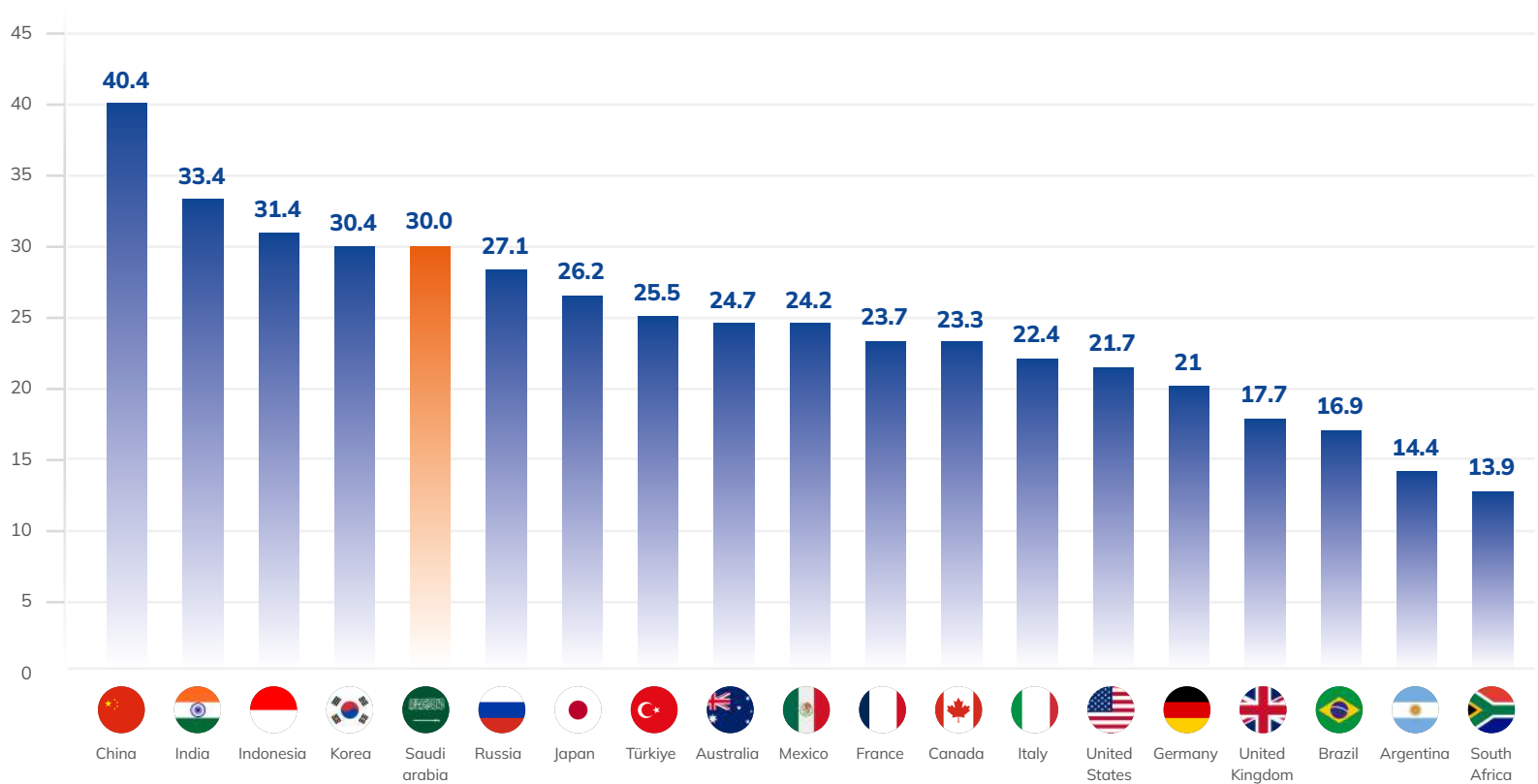
2

INVESTMENT OUTLOOK

After a period of gradual decline, global investment levels are expected to stabilise, with a slight recovery projected in 2026. According to the *IMF World Economic Outlook* (April 2025), global investment is forecast to represent **25.9% of GDP in 2025**, marginally lower than the **26.1%** recorded in 2024.²² The decline reflects weaker capital formation in **advanced economies**, particularly within the **G7** and the **Euro Zone**, where subdued growth prospects and tight financial conditions continue to weigh on investment. A modest rebound is projected in **2026**, with the global investment-to-GDP ratio rising to **26.2%**.²³



Figure 2.1. Total Investment as % of GDP, G20 countries, 2024



Source: International Monetary Fund (2025) World Economic Outlook, April 2025. Washington, D.C.: IMF. Available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [26.05.2025]

Saudi Arabia ranks among the most investment-intensive economies in the G20. According to the IMF, the Kingdom placed **5th in 2024** in terms of total investment as a share of GDP, reaching **30.0%**, ahead of several advanced and emerging economies.²⁴ This reflects the combined impact of high public capital expenditure and increasing private sector engagement, driven by the implementation of **Vision 2030** and the **National Investment Strategy (NIS)**.





Jeddah Corniche

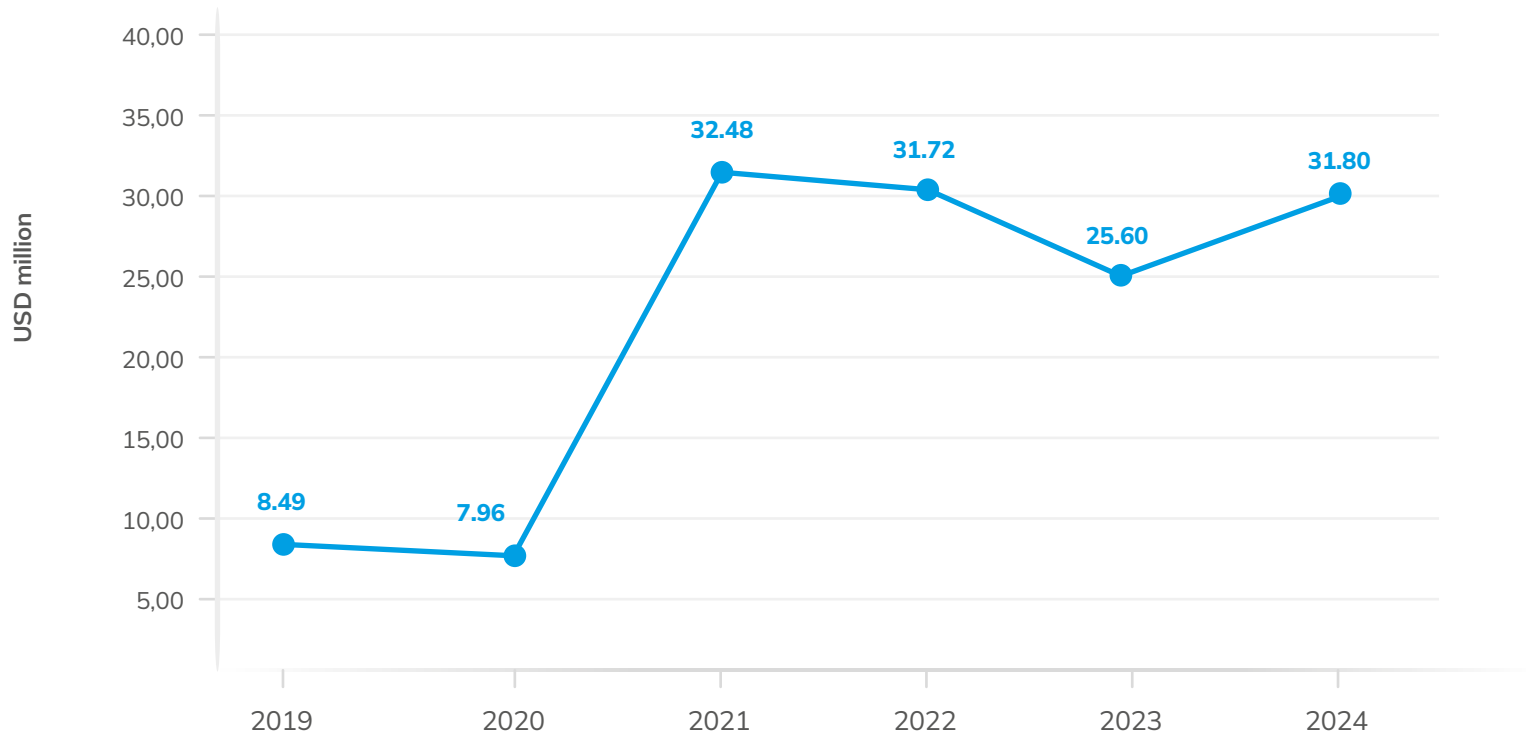
2.1 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Trends

Global FDI in 2024 increased marginally, by 4%, from USD 1.45 trillion to USD 1.51 trillion. However, this headline figure masks significant underlying weaknesses. It was inflated by volatile financial flows through several European economies with high levels of conduit flows. When these are excluded, global FDI flows in fact declined by 11%, from USD 1.67 trillion in 2023 to USD 1.49 trillion in 2024²⁵ – marking the second consecutive year of double-digit contraction and confirming persistent fragility in international investment flows.

Looking ahead, a moderate recovery is projected in 2025, but this is expected to be driven primarily by improved financing conditions and a rebound in merger and acquisition activity rather than broad-based expansion. The outlook remains clouded by geopolitical risks, weak global demand, and financial uncertainty, suggesting that cross-border investment flows will continue to face headwinds.²⁶

In 2024, FDI inflows reached USD 31.80 billion, marking a continuation of the upward trend observed since 2020, when FDI began accelerating following the introduction of reforms aimed at improving the business environment and investor confidence.²⁸

Figure 2.2. FDI inflows evolution in Saudi Arabia, 2019-2024



Source: Ministry of Investments Saudi Arabia, MISA (2025)

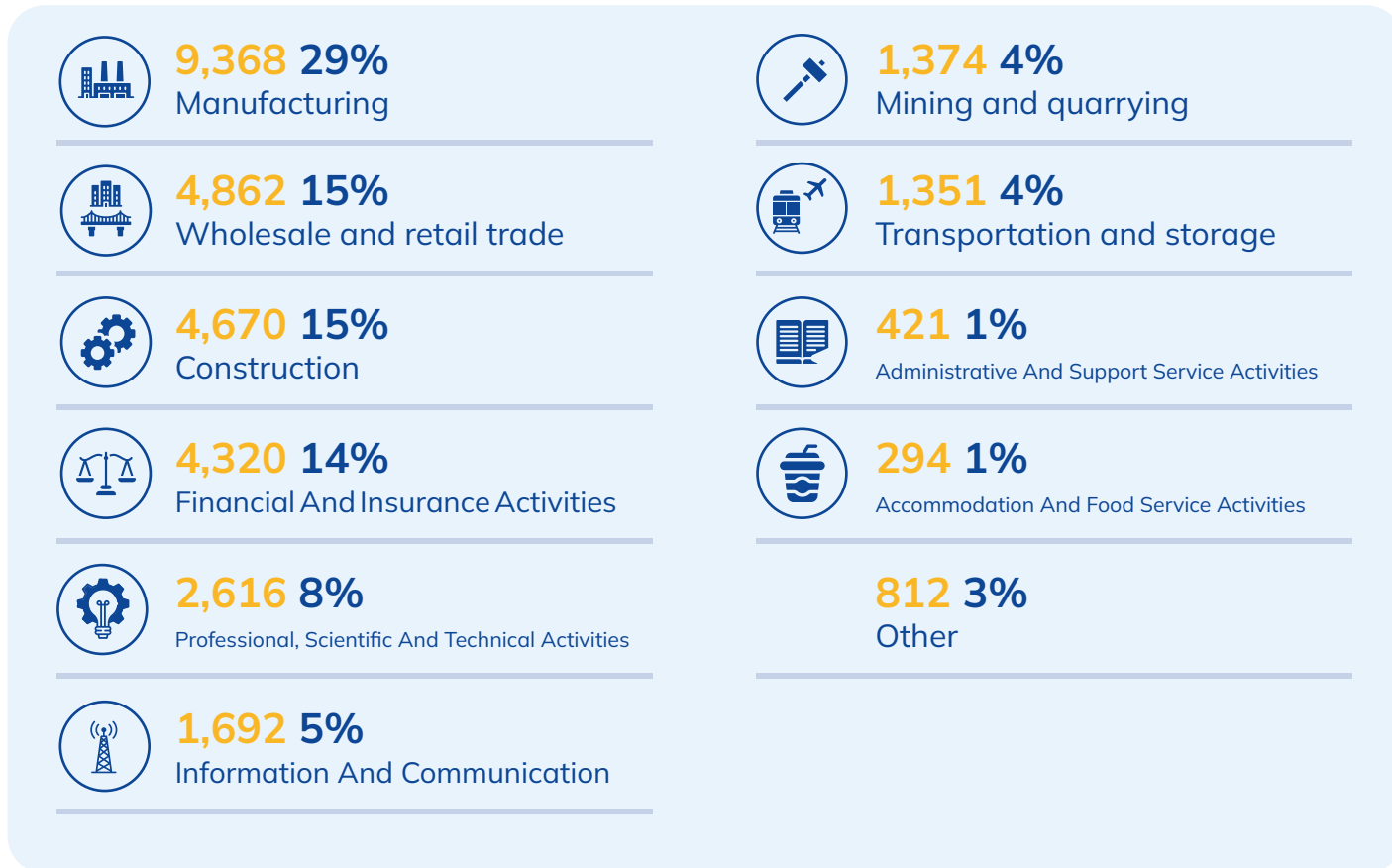
Note: 2021 and 2022 FDI figures are updated



In 2024, the distribution of **FDI inflows** across sectors in Saudi Arabia remained heavily concentrated in several strategic areas aligned with national development priorities. **Manufacturing** accounted for the largest share, with an FDI inflow of **USD 9,368 million**, representing **29%** of the total. It was followed by **wholesale and retail trade (USD 4,862 million, or 15%)**, **construction (USD 4,670 million, or 15%)** and **financial and insurance activities (USD 4,320 million, or 14%)**. These four sectors alone represented over **70%** of total FDI inflows, highlighting their centrality in the Kingdom's diversification and industrial policy agenda.

Additional capital was attracted in **professional, scientific and technical activities (USD 2,616 million, or 8%)** and **information and communication (USD 1,692 million, or 5%)**. FDI inflows in **accommodation and food services**, which includes tourism-related activities, stood at **USD 294 million**, equivalent to **1%** of the total. Although still a relatively modest share, it reflects an **upward trajectory as tourism becomes one of the priority sectors under Vision 2030**. Other sectors such as agriculture, education, and entertainment represented less than 1% of FDI inflows, consistent with their more limited capital intensity and earlier stage of market development.

Figure 2.3. FDI inflows by sector, 2024 (USD million)



Source: Ministry of Investments Saudi Arabia, MISA (2025)

Qasr Al Kateb (Al Kateb Palace), Taif

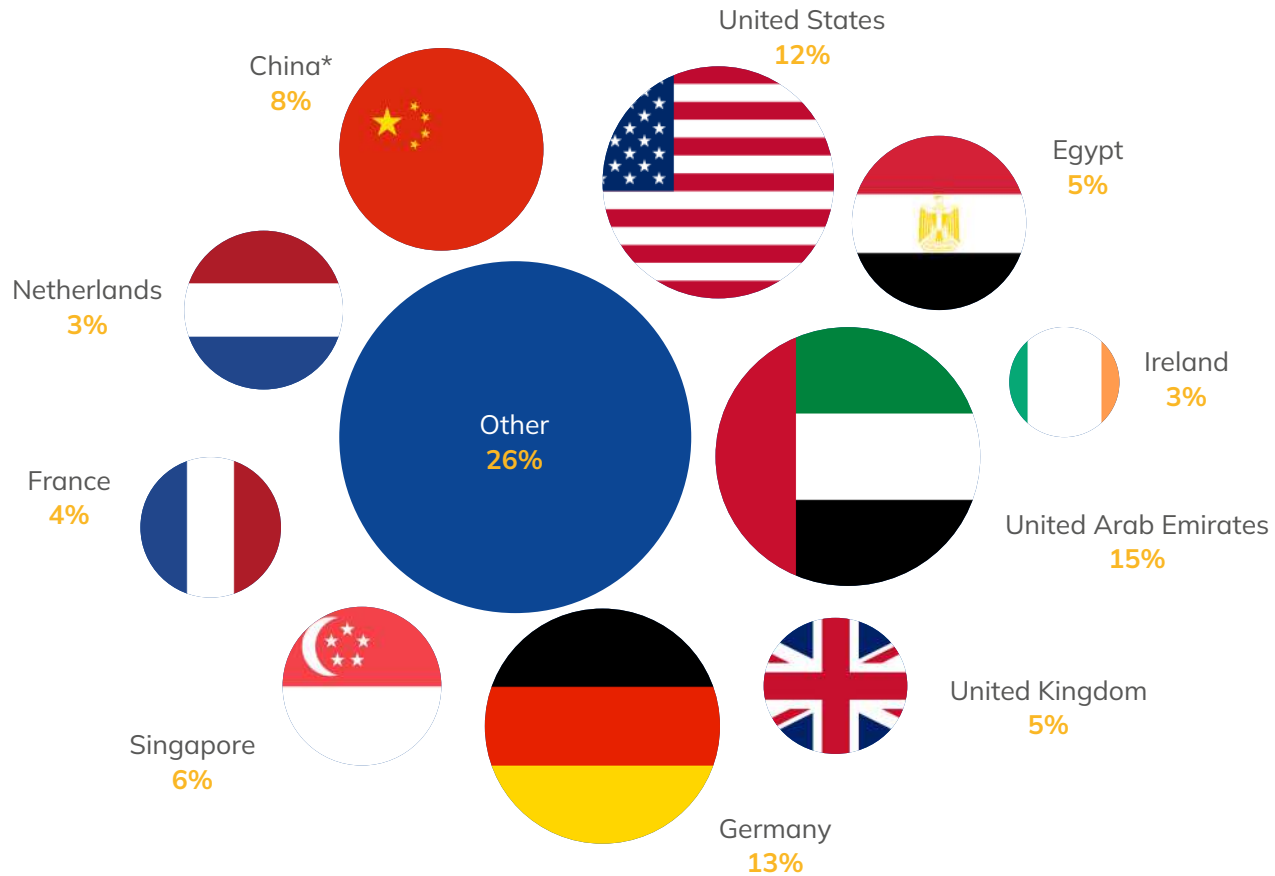


In 2024, Saudi Arabia's FDI inflows originated from a diverse range of sources, with both regional partners and global financial hubs playing a prominent role. Germany, the United Arab Emirates and the United States were the leading sources, accounting around 40% of total FDI inflows, with investments amounting to USD 12,795 million collectively.

China followed with **USD 2,607 million (8%)**, reflecting its strong presence in energy, technology, and industrial sectors.²⁹ Several regional partners also featured prominently, including **Egypt (USD 1,728 million, or 5%)**, underscoring the continued importance of regional capital flows. Other European economies such as the **United Kingdom (USD 1,542 million)**, **France (USD 1,204 million)** and the **Netherlands (USD 956 million)**, represented a significant share, reflecting strong institutional and corporate investment links.³⁰

Cumulatively, the top 10 source economies accounted for 74% of Saudi Arabia's total FDI inflows in 2024. The remaining **USD 8,197 million**, or approximately **26%**³¹, originated from other countries, pointing to a growing pool of diversified investment partners beyond traditional centres.

Figure 2.4. Top Origin of FDI inflows (%), 2024



Source: General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), provided by Ministry of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Note: China includes China, Hong Kong, Taiwan POC




















2.2 Investment Trends in Tourism

Tourism is entering a new era of growth and transformation globally, with investment at the core of sustaining this trajectory. Between 2019 and 2024, the sector attracted 2,242 announced greenfield projects worldwide, valued at USD 122.1 billion.³² These figures highlight both the scale of opportunity and the need for stronger frameworks to secure long-term capital, diversify funding sources, and build resilient project pipelines.

Within this global landscape, the Middle East has seen a marked increase in FDI directed at the tourism sector, driven by national efforts to diversify economies and strengthen non-oil growth engines. Over the same period, the region attracted 292 announced projects with estimated CAPEX exceeding USD 13.6 billion, confirming its position as one of the fastest-growing destinations for tourism investment.

A similar trend is visible across the G20, where tourism has attracted substantial inflows of greenfield investment, with 1,680 projects announced and a combined CAPEX of USD 71.6 billion. Among these, Saudi Arabia stood out as a leading recipient, with 56 projects amounting to USD 1.9 billion³³, underscoring its growing prominence as a destination for international tourism investment.

Figure 2.5. Tourism Greenfield Investment Projects in G20 economies,by announced projects, 2019-2024

	Number of projects	CAPEX (USD million)
 EU	768	22,820
 United States	195	13,218
 United Kingdom	170	5,008
 Mexico	79	5,781
 China	65	8,163
 Saudi Arabia	56	1,945
 Australia	55	1,495
 Türkiye	52	554
 India	51	1,884
 Canada	48	1,890
 Japan	34	2,574
 Indonesia	29	3,340
 Brazil	22	568
 South Africa	17	276
 Russia	15	1,193
 Argentina	13	194
 South Korea	11	737
Total	1,680	71,638

Source: fDi Markets (2025) Greenfield Investment Data – Tourism Sector in the Middle East (2019–2024). Financial Times Ltd. Available online: <https://www.fdimarkets.com> [26.05.2025]

FDI in the tourism sector in the Middle East originated from a wide range of economies. **India** led by number of projects (**38**), while **China** ranked first by CAPEX, with commitments totalling **USD 2.4 billion**.³⁴ Other key investors included the **United Arab Emirates, United States, United Kingdom, and France**, reflecting broad international engagement in the region's tourism development.

Intra-regional capital flows were also significant. The **UAE**, in addition to being the top recipient, was the **second-largest source of outbound tourism FDI**, with **36 projects** and **USD 2.1 billion** in announced investment. **Saudi Arabia** featured among the top sources as well, with **six outbound projects** valued at **USD 555 million**, underscoring the dual role of GCC countries as both investment destinations and emerging exporters of tourism capital.

Between 2019 and 2024, tourism-related FDI projects in Saudi Arabia originated from a wide range of economies. By announced CAPEX, China was the largest source, accounting for nearly half of total inflows with USD 916 million across nine projects. This was followed by the United Arab Emirates (USD 464 million, 11 projects) and the United States (USD 343 million, five projects)³⁵, suggesting different investment approaches.

Other sources included the United Kingdom, India, and Spain, each with several projects but comparatively modest capital commitments. Smaller contributions came from Germany, Jordan, Argentina, and Bahrain, indicating a gradual broadening of the investor base. Overall, while Asian partners dominate in scale, the diversity of origins reflects expanding international interest in Saudi Arabia's tourism sector.





While foreign direct investment is expanding, Saudi Arabia's tourism development remains largely driven by domestic capital. Central to this effort is the role of the **Public Investment Fund (PIF)**, which has positioned tourism as a strategic sector within the Kingdom's broader economic diversification strategy. PIF has committed over **USD 100 billion** to tourism, culture, and entertainment, with tourism-specific projects accounting for a substantial share of this allocation.³⁶ Flagship initiatives include **NEOM, Red Sea Global, AMAALA, Diriyah,** and **AIUla**, combining heritage, nature, luxury, and innovation across distinct destination models.

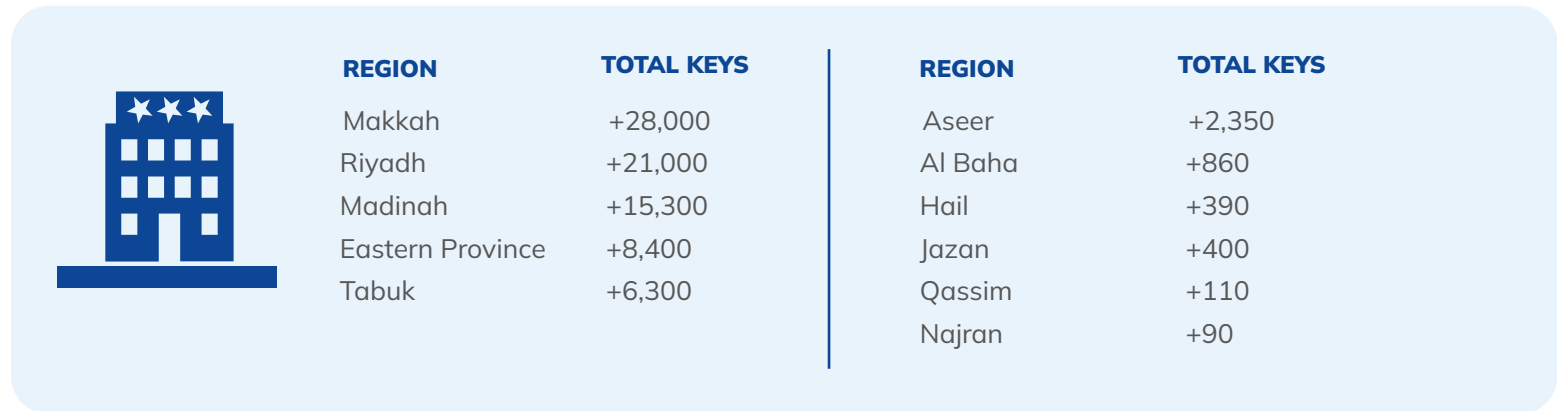
Several government-led tourism developments in Saudi Arabia rank among the largest and most capital-intensive in the world. **Red Sea Global**, for example, has committed to delivering **50 hotels and 8,000 rooms** by 2030, with phase one alone attracting **USD 8.5 billion** in financing secured through a mix of public capital and green financing instruments.³⁷

To strengthen its role in the sector, PIF also established the **Saudi Tourism Investment Company (Asfar)** in 2023, tasked with identifying and developing tourism assets across the Kingdom. Asfar operates as a strategic investor and master developer, supporting regional tourism ecosystems and unlocking opportunities in destinations such as Al-Baha, Yanbu, Al-Taif, Al-Ahsa, Al-Jouf, Al-Khobar, Al-Dammam, Hail, among others.³⁸

In parallel, the **Tourism Development Fund (TDF)** plays a key role in enabling private sector participation. With a capital base of **SAR 15 billion** (approximately **USD 4 billion**), the fund provides concessional loans, loan guarantees, and co-financing mechanisms aimed at crowding in investment, particularly for SMEs and projects in underdeveloped areas. Since its launch in 2020, TDF has approved over **135 projects** (as of September 2025) and signed multiple co-investment agreements with private entities and financial institutions.³⁹



Figure 2.6 Hotel pipeline 2025-2034



Source: STR, data provided by the Ministry of Tourism (2025)

Note: The information presented in this report reflects private sector pipeline data as of Q2 2025 and is preliminary, subject to further updates or changes

Alongside large-scale public initiatives, private investors are set to play a decisive role in shaping Saudi Arabia’s tourism future. Their participation not only diversifies sources of capital but also embeds local knowledge, networks, and entrepreneurship into the sector’s growth. Family-owned businesses and developers are increasingly active in hotels, F&B concepts, and leisure facilities, often partnering in co-investment schemes promoted by the Tourism Development Fund, creating a more resilient and inclusive tourism ecosystem that spreads benefits across regions and communities.

The hotel pipeline illustrates the scale of opportunity. Between 2025 and 2034, more than **83,000 new keys** are expected to be built, with **Makkah, Riyadh, and Madinah** capturing the largest shares, while secondary destinations such as the Eastern Province, Tabuk, and Aseer also feature prominently. The supply mix is weighted towards

five-star (49%) and four-star (29%) properties, with midscale (17%) and economy (2%) segments providing essential capacity for affordability and year-round occupancy. This luxury bias reinforces the Kingdom’s positioning at the upper end of the market, while the presence of midscale projects ensures wider accessibility. Reliance on private developers and operators is critical: they mobilise capital at scale, accelerate delivery, and bring operational expertise, helping to manage seasonal swings and strengthen Saudi Arabia’s position as one of the fastest-expanding hotel markets globally.

Green Investments in Tourism

Sustainability is becoming a central pillar of Saudi Arabia's tourism strategy, with major investments embedding environmental considerations into large-scale developments. These efforts form part of a broader transition to low-impact development models under **Vision 2030** and the **Saudi Green Initiative**, which aims to reduce emissions and enhance ecosystem resilience across sectors.

This policy is supported by dedicated financial tools. The **Green Financing Framework**, managed by the **National Debt Management Center**, enables the issuance of green bonds and sukuk to finance low-carbon projects, including those in eco-tourism and sustainable infrastructure.⁴⁰ The **Public Investment Fund (PIF)**, through its green bond programme, has reported financing **11 green building projects**, generating estimated energy savings of over **2.4 million MWh annually**.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) promotes sustainable practices by offering concessional loans and co-financing programs to tourism enterprises committed to leading environmental practices and standards across the Kingdom. These financial incentives are further linked to the achievement of sustainability-related impact areas that align with broader national objectives, ensuring that supported projects contribute meaningfully to Saudi Arabia's long-term environmental, social, and economic goals.⁴²

A notable example is the **Red Sea Project**, which secured a **SAR 14.12 billion (USD 3.76 billion)** green loan from a consortium of Saudi banks, marking the first Riyal-denominated credit facility to receive Green Financing accreditation.⁴³





Al Wajh Lagoon, Tabuk

2.3 Investment in Innovation and Startup Ecosystem

Saudi Arabia is building a vibrant startup ecosystem that empowers entrepreneurs and drives innovation across key sectors. National initiatives provide incubation, funding, mentorship, and regulatory support to help startups grow from ideas to scalable businesses. These efforts are shaping a diverse, knowledge-based economy and positioning the Kingdom as a regional hub for innovation and creativity.

As the innovation landscape continues to expand, the Kingdom is enhancing the overall business environment to ensure that creative ideas can seamlessly evolve into viable investment opportunities. Aligned with this direction, the establishment of the **Saudi Business Center's sector-based one-stop-shop** provides investors and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector with a unified access point offering a wide range of services — from licensing, advisory, financing, matchmaking, and real estate facilitation, ensuring consistent and efficient support throughout every stage of the investment journey from setup to expansion and beyond.

Through both physical and virtual channels, the center simplifies procedures, enhances coordination, and strengthens collaboration across sectors. It reflects the Kingdom's ongoing commitment to building a more agile, transparent, and investor-friendly business environment — one that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic growth.

These measures reinforce Vision 2030's ambition to increase SMEs' contribution to GDP from 20% to 35%, ensuring entrepreneurs are equipped to play a central role in the Kingdom's transformation. As an additional step toward digital innovation in tourism, the Saudi Tourism Authority recently introduced Sara AI, a virtual assistant designed to enhance visitor services and strengthen the country's positioning as a forward-looking destination.

1,733

active startups

28%

of all startups in the Middle East

38th

globally in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index

USD 34.5 billion

in investment since 2017

Source: Startup Blink

According to Startup Blink, Saudi Arabia's startup has more than 1,700 active startups in 2025 — equivalent to around five startups per 100,000 people — the Kingdom now represents 28% of all startups in the Middle East. This marks a staggering +236.8% growth in just one year and places the country 38th globally in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index, after climbing 27 positions compared to 2024.

The rapid rise of the ecosystem is reflected in the emergence of three unicorns. Transportation, e-commerce, and foodtech stand out among the most dynamic industries, while deep tech areas such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things are increasingly attracting both public and private capital. Riyadh dominates the national scene, ranking 72nd worldwide, but other cities such as Jeddah, Dammam and Medina are also gaining traction, signalling a more geographically distributed innovation landscape.

This momentum is underpinned by a significant flow of capital. Since 2017, Saudi startups have attracted more than USD 34.5 billion in investment, equivalent to 22% of all startup funding in the Middle East. Between 2023 and 2024 alone, startup funding increased by 675%, underscoring growing investor confidence in the Saudi market. Public funds, sovereign wealth initiatives and corporate champions are complementing the venture capital ecosystem, ensuring that startups at different stages of maturity have access to the resources needed to scale.



TDF Grow: Tourism Development Fund has set up TDF Grow to promote the startup ecosystem in the tourism sector. TDF Grow's vision

is to drive innovation, nurture talent, and provide entrepreneurs with the right tools and business environment to assist their businesses to thrive. Which provides the below services:

Programs: TDF grow offers an array of programs, including business accelerators, and conducts training camps to bolster entrepreneurs' success.

Mass Training: TDF grow organizes frequent training sessions for individuals involved in the tourism industry with the objective of expanding their expertise and competencies.

Entrepreneurs Offerings: TDF Grow collaborates with numerous entrepreneurs and business owners. This feature aims to share prominent service offerings that contribute to the success of their projects.

Mentor: Mentorship sessions consist of a scheduled session between a mentor and an applicant. These sessions are designed to provide essential guidance and support in areas needed by entrepreneurs.

Spaces: offering collaborative workspaces that foster the growth and advancement of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.

Library: A library of educational and motivational materials for recorded training sessions, aimed at supporting and empowering entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

Maraya, the world's largest mirror-clad structure, Al Ula



3

COMPETITIVE OUTLOOK

Saudi Arabia is making significant strides in reshaping its economy, with progress visible not only in the tourism sector but across a wide range of strategic areas. This transformation is aligned with the objectives of **Vision 2030**, which places particular emphasis on economic diversification, private sector development, and institutional modernisation. The impact of this agenda can be seen in areas such as **business environment, digital infrastructure, entrepreneurship, governance, macroeconomic stability, and the investment climate**, where the Kingdom is gaining greater international visibility.

This positioning is reflected in various global benchmarks that shed light on the country's performance across key dimensions of competitiveness:





1 (G20)

Population Growth Rate



4 (G20)

World Competitiveness Ranking



17th globalWorld
Competitiveness Ranking



20th UNIDO Quality
Infrastructure for Sustainable Development Index



2 (G20)

E-Government Development Index



2 (G20)

ICT Development Index



A+ stable
Saudi Arabia Credit Rating (S&P)



A+ stable
Saudi Arabia Credit Rating (Fitch)



Aa3 stable
Saudi Arabia Credit Rating (Moody's)



1 (G20)

National Entrepreneurship Context Index



3/198
GovTech Maturity Index



5 (G20)
E-Participation Index



5 (G20)
Total Investment % of GDP



8 (G20)
Human Capital Index



8 (G20)
Global Happiness Index



8 (G20)
Global Talent Index



1/133
ICT Access



7/193 9th by market
E-Participation Index



cap
Saudi Stock Exchange



10 (G20)
FDI net inflows

Source: Invest Saudi (2025), Economic and Investment Monitor - Q1 2025, available online at: <https://misa.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025]



Edge of the World Rock



3.1 Tourism Sector Overview

Global Overview

International tourist arrivals totalled **1,470 million** in 2024 globally, representing a **12.4% increase** over 2023 and matching the total recorded in 2019. This figure includes both advanced and emerging economies, with the latter showing slightly faster year-on-year growth (+14.5% vs. +9.2%).⁴⁴ Export revenues from international tourism, including both international tourism receipts and passenger transport, reached **USD 2.0 trillion in 2024, a real increase of 11%** over 2023 and **15% above** 2019 levels. International tourism receipts alone accounted for **USD 1.7 trillion**, equivalent to approximately **6% of global exports** of goods and services and **23% of global services trade**.⁴⁵

Spending per international trip in 2024 averaged **USD 1,182** (constant prices), up from around USD 1,000 in 2019. This reflects stronger-than-expected visitor spending in many destinations, even though inflation in services continues to be higher than in the overall economy. Tourism inflation eased moderately to 8.0% in 2024 but still exceeded the 5.7% headline rate of inflation.

According to the latest UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer, data for the first half of 2025 confirms a continuation of positive momentum. Between January and June 2025, international arrivals increased by **5%** compared to the same period in 2024 and stood **4% above** 2019 levels. Early data on international tourism receipts also indicate sustained growth in visitor spending across several key markets.

Regional Overview – The Middle East

The Middle East received **101.2 million** international tourist arrivals in 2024, an **8.3% increase** over 2023. It was the region with the highest relative growth compared to pre-pandemic figures. This performance was driven in large part by countries in the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**, which collectively registered a **11.0% increase** in arrivals compared to 2019.⁴⁶

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar were among the main contributors to this regional trend. Growth was underpinned by large-scale investments in tourism infrastructure, increased air connectivity, and expanded international event calendars.

In the first half of 2025, international arrivals in the Middle East decreased by 4% relative to the same period in 2024. Despite the slower pace compared to 2024, the region maintained the strongest growth globally in comparison to pre-pandemic levels, with arrivals **29.3% above** those of 2019.⁴⁷



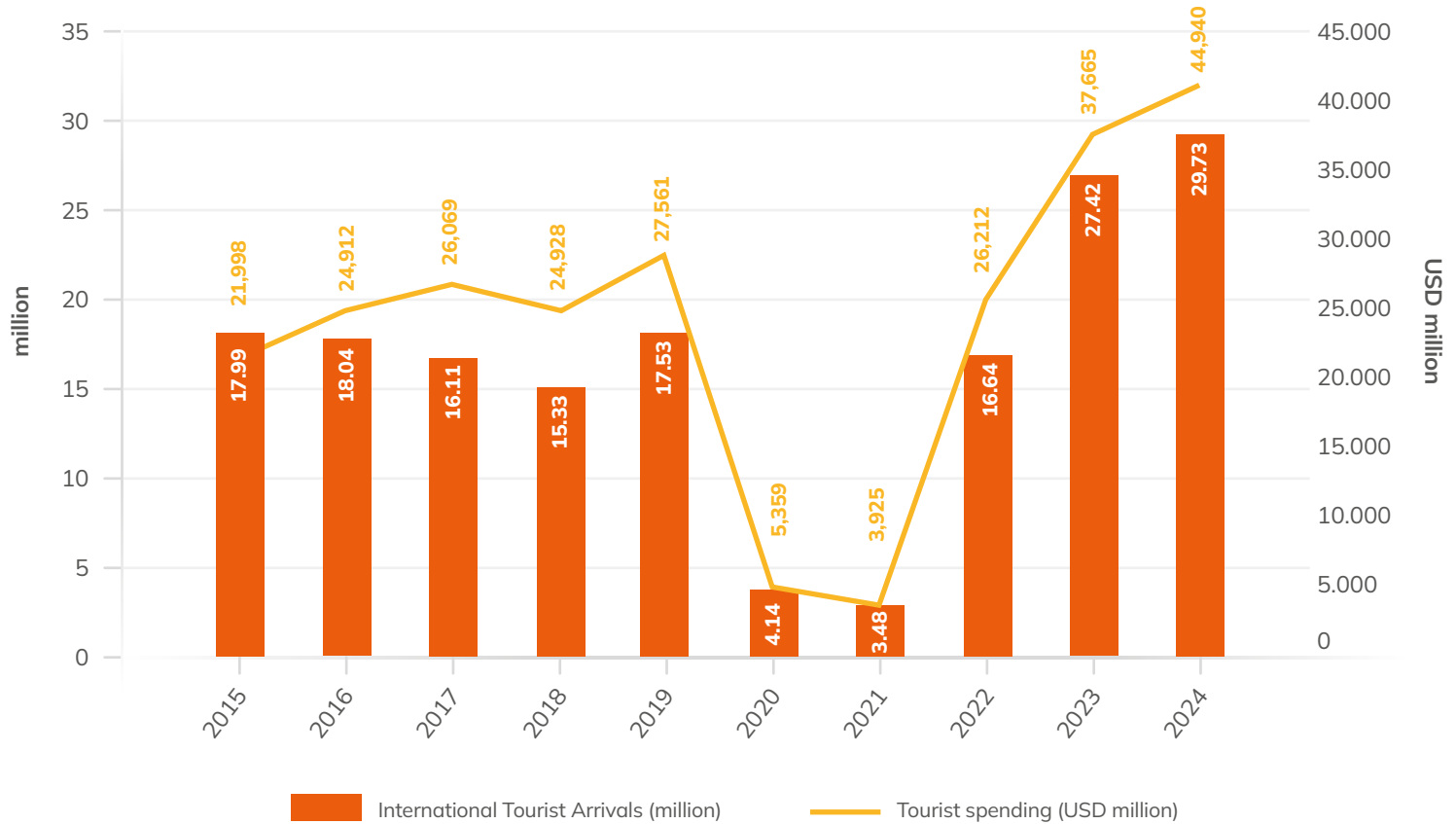


In 2024, Saudi Arabia recorded **29.7 million international tourist arrivals**⁴⁸, positioning it among the **top-performing global destinations** in terms of absolute growth. This figure represents a **70% increase compared to 2019** (17.5 million) and a **year-on-year growth of 8.4%** over 2023 (27.4 million). Over the last decade (2015–2024), international arrivals have grown at a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.8%**, despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism receipts followed a similar trajectory. International visitor spending reached **USD 44.9 million** in 2024, up **19% from 2023**.⁴⁹ While per capita spending in 2024 stood at **USD 1,512**, slightly below 2019 levels (**USD 1,573**), this is likely due to the diversification of source markets and the scale effect of large volume increases.

This performance places Saudi Arabia in the **global top tier of destinations in terms of post-pandemic tourism growth**, both in relative and absolute terms. The country's strong performance is underpinned by structural reforms in visa policy, improved international air connectivity, and a higher international profile due to promotional campaigns and international events.

Figure 3.1. International Tourist Arrivals and Spending, 2015-2024



Source: UN Tourism and Saudi Arabia Ministry of Tourism

In 2024, Asia and the Pacific became the largest source region for inbound travel to Saudi Arabia, accounting for 9.7 million tourist arrivals (33% of the total) and recording a 10% year-on-year increase. Pakistan led with 2.8 million visitors, followed by India (1.9 million) and Indonesia (1.9 million).⁵⁰

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) contributed 8.4 million arrivals (28%), with a strong 20% increase compared to 2023. Egypt was the single largest source market overall with 3.2 million arrivals, followed by Jordan (1.2 million), Iraq (1.0 million) and Yemen (1.0 million).

Tourist arrivals from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reached 8.0 million (27%), but with a decline of -8% year-on-year. Bahrain remained the leading source with 2.6 million visitors, ahead of Kuwait (2.1 million) and the United Arab Emirates (1.5 million).⁵¹

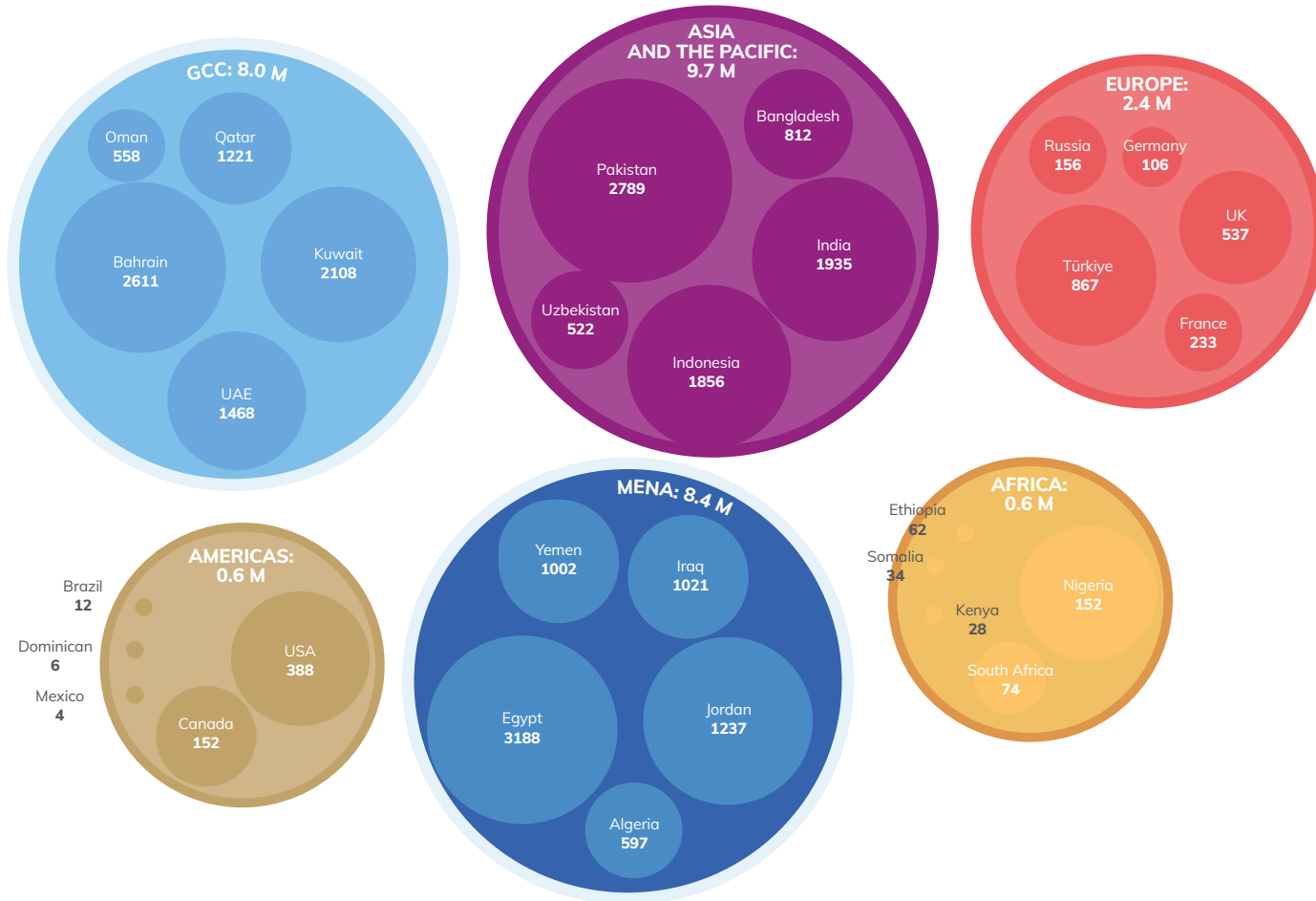
Arrivals from Europe reached 2.4 million (8%), making it the fastest-growing region with a +30% increase over 2023. Türkiye led with 867.7K arrivals, followed by the United Kingdom (536,09k) and France (233.3K).⁵²

By contrast, international tourist arrivals from the Americas and Africa remained modest, both contributing 0.6 million each (2%), though showing consistent year-on-year growth (+24% and +1%, respectively).⁵³

In 2024, Europe was recorded as the fastest-growing region in terms of inbound tourists, with a 30% increase compared to 2023. Türkiye was the largest contributor, accounting for a 33% share of the European inbound tourist growth, followed by the UK at 29%, and France at 12%. At the same time Asia-Pacific region emerged as the leading source for inbound tourists to Saudi Arabia, accounting for a significant 33%. Within this region, China experienced the highest growth compared to 2023, recording a 48% increase. This evolution is consistent with the objectives of Vision 2030, which seek not only to expand visitor volumes but also to broaden geographic reach and attract higher-value segments, building a more globally integrated and resilient tourism sector.



Figure 3.2 Tourist Arrivals per origin market (thousands), 2024



Source: Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications>

Visa Policy and Source Market Expansion

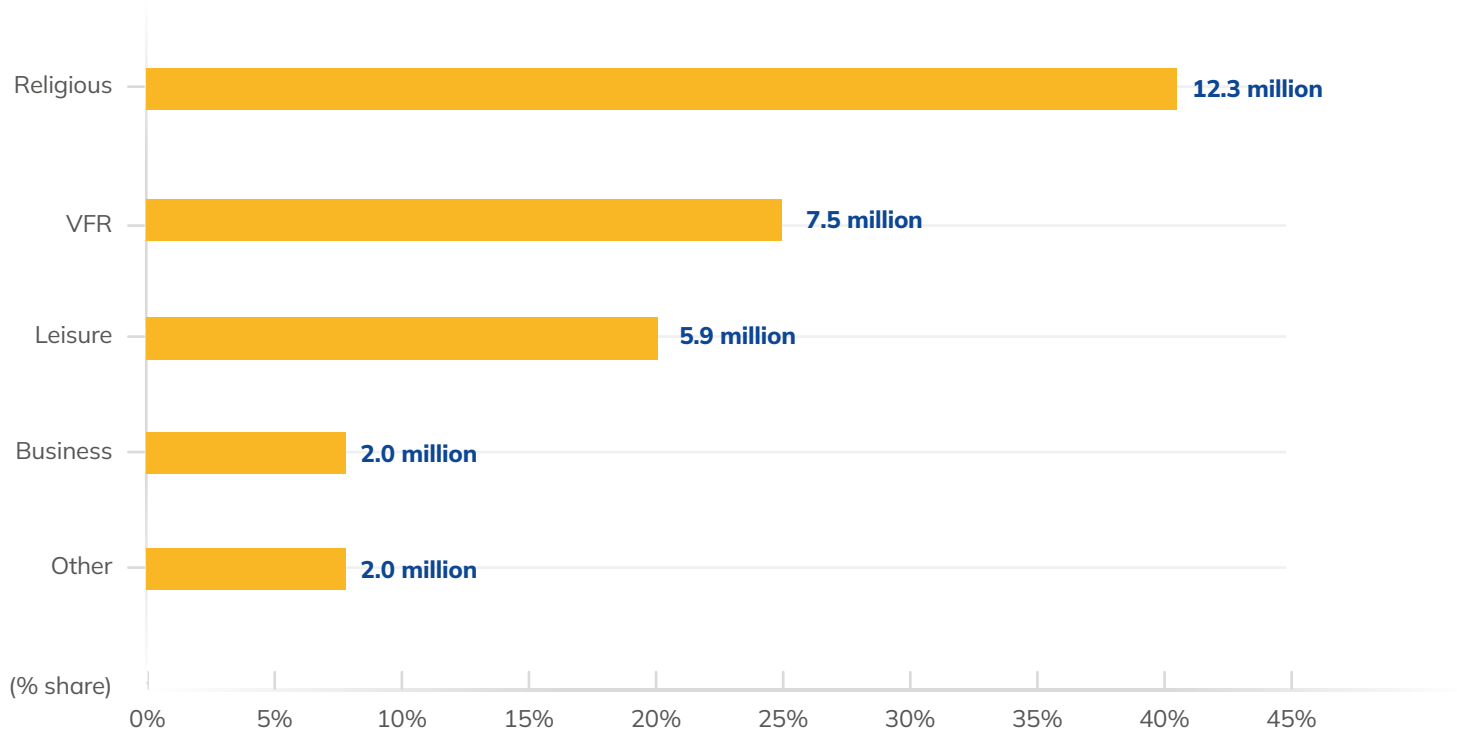
Saudi Arabia's inbound tourism growth has been strongly supported by visa facilitation reforms, most notably the rollout of the **eVisa** scheme, which now covers **66 countries**. The one-year, multiple-entry eVisa permits stays of up to 90 days and is valid for leisure, business events (MICE), visiting friends and relatives (VFR), and Umrah. It excludes Hajj, which remains subject to separate religious travel regulations. The scheme includes all major outbound markets such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and Australia, with China most recently added in mid-2024.

Building on this foundation, Saudi Arabia has expanded access through additional visa facilitation measures. Travellers holding valid residence permits or visas from the **Schengen area**, the **United Kingdom**, or the **United States** are now eligible for **visa-on-arrival**, streamlining entry procedures. Similarly, **GCC residents** can apply for an **eVisa** regardless of nationality, facilitating greater regional mobility. In early 2024, the country also launched a **free electronic transit visa**, allowing passengers in transit to stay in Saudi Arabia for up to **96 hours**—encouraging **stopover tourism** and short-stay visits.

The extension of **Approved Destination Status (ADS)** to China, effective 1 July 2024, marks another significant milestone. It enables the development of group travel packages and positions China as a priority growth market. The government aims to attract 5 million Chinese tourists by 2030, supported by the expansion of direct air connectivity and Mandarin-language integration across key services and platforms. Since 2023, inbound seat capacity from China has increased by 130%, with weekly flight frequency doubling, including new services from Air China, China Eastern, and China Southern, in addition to existing Saudia routes.

This multi-pronged visa and connectivity strategy is central to Saudi Arabia's efforts to diversify its source markets beyond traditional regional flows and to capture a larger share of global tourism demand—particularly from high-volume, high-spending markets such as China.



Figure 3.3. Main Purpose of Trip of International Tourist Arrivals, 2024

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2025), Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025]

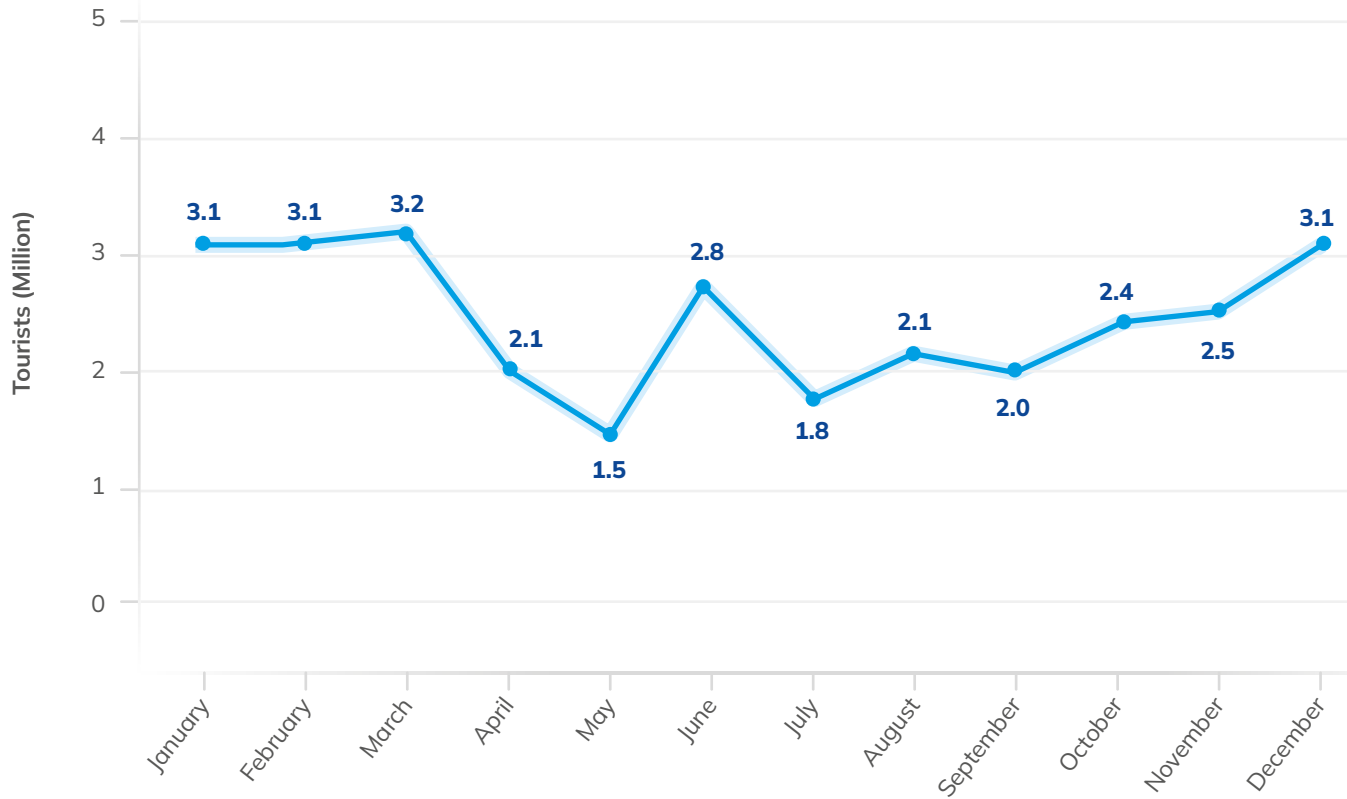


In 2024, religious tourism continued to represent the largest single segment of inbound travel, accounting for 41% of total arrivals (12.3 million trips).⁵⁴ Yet the overall composition of tourism has shifted markedly in recent years, with non-religious purposes now representing 59% of all inbound trips, compared to just 44% in 2019. This reflects a profound diversification of travel demand and a widening of the Kingdom's appeal beyond its traditional religious base.

Leisure travel has been the most dynamic component, rising to 25% of arrivals (7.5 million trips), an increase of 20% compared to 2023. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) accounted for a further 20% (5.9 million trips), while business travel and other purposes each represented 7% (2.0 million trips).⁵⁵

The number of inbound non-religious tourists has increased by 127% since 2019⁵⁶, underscoring the scale of structural change in Saudi Arabia's inbound market. While religious travel remains at the core of the tourism sector, the sustained rise of leisure, VFR, and business segments highlights the Kingdom's progress in broadening its offer and attracting a more diverse visitor base, in line with the objectives of Vision 2030.

Figure 3.4. Seasonality of International Tourist Arrivals, 2024



Source: Ministry of Tourism (2025), Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025]

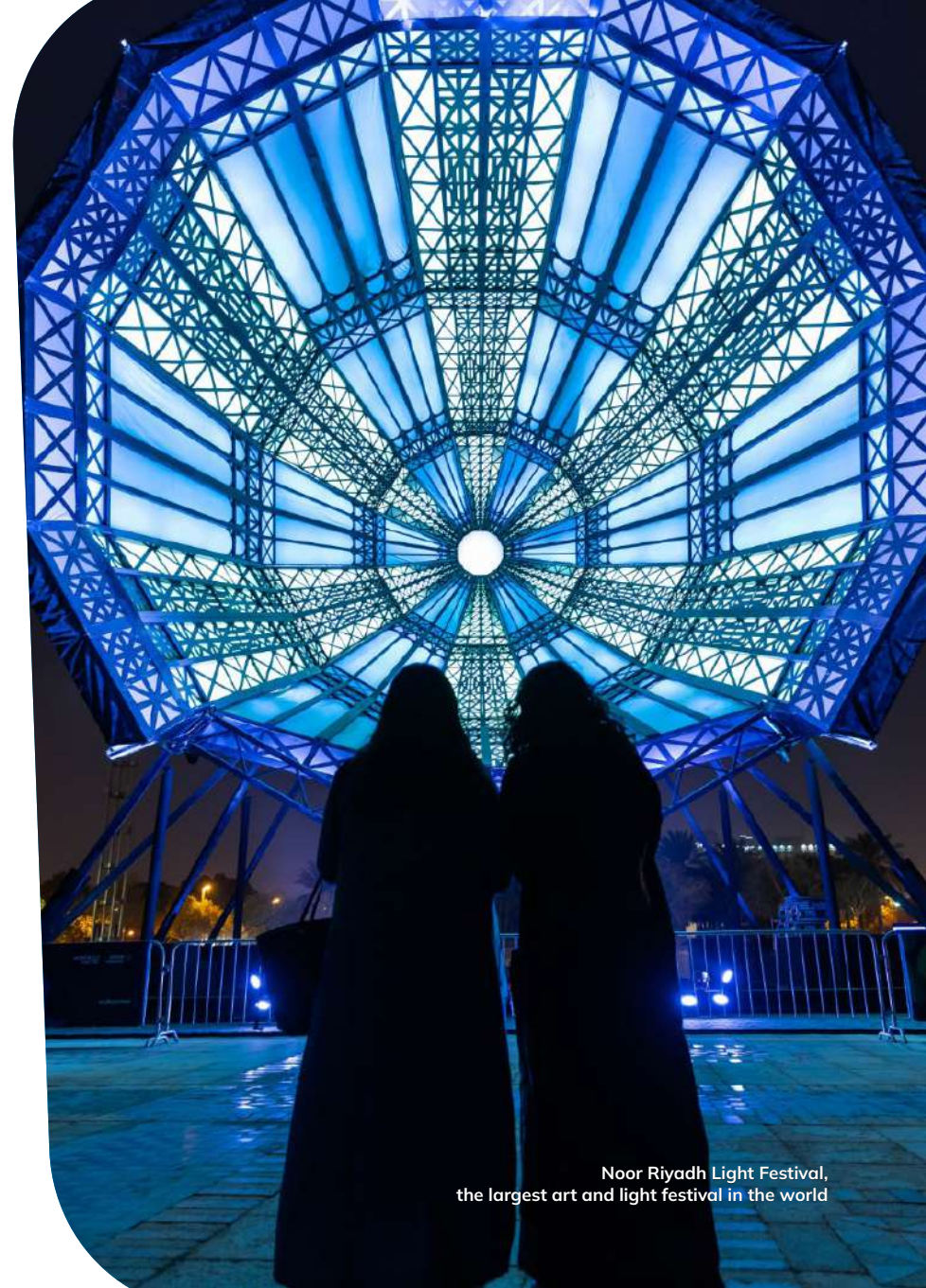
Saudi Arabia tourism landscape is undergoing a significant strategic transformation, evidenced by the rising role of leisure and Business purposes. This shift is reshaping traditional seasonality flow.

Inbound tourism to Saudi Arabia shows significant growth in the winter season, specifically during December, January, and February. This is due to the rising demand for leisure tourism during this period, and it is a direct result of major events like Riyadh Season and Formula 1 and the launch of giga project such as the RedSea, which have had a huge impact on the overall growth of inbound tourism.

In essence, the winter growth is a powerful indicator that the investment in these large-scale entertainment and sporting offerings is successfully transforming the seasonal visitor profile and dramatically increasing the inbound tourism footprint.

The distribution of inbound tourism in 2024 highlights the rising role of non-religious travel, specifically for Leisure purposes, which grew by 6.7 times +565% in 2024 compared to 2019.⁵⁷

The winter season is now a major contributor, with January, February, and December each now reaching around 3.1 million inbound tourists. Furthermore, summer season in Saudi Arabia has also been thriving, boosted by the introduction of emerging destinations such as AIUla and the mountain regions.



Noor Riyadh Light Festival,
the largest art and light festival in the world

Figure 3.5. Average Length of Stay (nights), 2022-2024



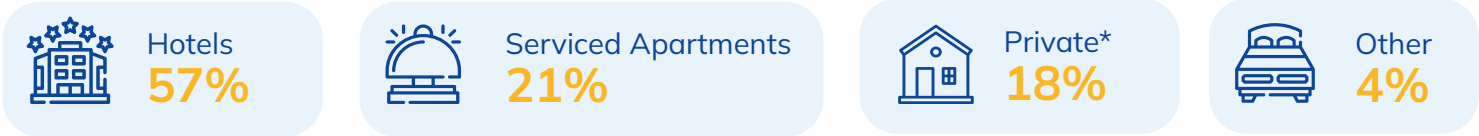
Source: Ministry of Tourism (2025), Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025]

The average length of stay for international visitors to Saudi Arabia has increased notably in recent years. In **2024**, the average stay reached **19 nights**, up from **11 nights in 2019**.⁵⁸ This increase reflects a broader shift in the composition and purpose of visits. As non-religious travel segments expand—particularly leisure, VFR, and business—the average duration of stay has grown accordingly.



Maraya, the world's largest mirror-clad building, Al Ula

Figure 3.6 Type of Preferred Accommodation, 2024



Note: Private: Friends or Relatives or Private Home Owned by the Tourist.

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2025), Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025]. Numbers rounded to the nearest thenth.

Hotels are the dominant accommodation type among international visitors to Saudi Arabia, accounting for **57% of stays** in 2024, equivalent to approximately **16.8 million tourists**. This is followed by **serviced apartments**, which hosted **21%** of inbound tourists (6.5 million), and **private accommodation**—including stays with family and friends— which represented **18%** (5.4 million).

The data highlights a relatively high reliance on formal accommodation, with **hotels and apartments together representing 78% of all recorded stays**. This reflects the growing maturity of the tourism sector and the increasing presence of both international chains and domestic hospitality providers. At the same time, the substantial share of private accommodation—particularly linked to VFR—points to the need for service diversification beyond traditional hotel offerings.

Domestic Tourism

Alongside the expansion of international arrivals, domestic tourism plays a complementary role by sustaining demand, supporting year-round activity, and ensuring the benefits of tourism are spread more evenly across the Kingdom.

Domestic tourism has nearly doubled since 2019, confirming its role as a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's visitor economy. In 2024, Saudi residents made **86.16 million domestic trips**, a rise of 5.2% compared with 2023 (81.92 million) and 80.2% above 2019 (47.81 million). These trips generated **583.62 million overnight stays**, with an average length of 6.25 nights. The steady expansion of tourism infrastructure, cultural offerings, and events is raising awareness among residents of the diversity of destinations available within the Kingdom.

Spending has increased even more sharply. Domestic travellers spent **USD 30.74 billion** in 2024, an 88.3% increase compared with 2019 (USD 16.32 billion). This strong home market provides a stable backbone for the sector, complementing international inflows, reducing exposure to global shocks, and reinforcing the long-term case for continued investment in tourism products and services. Its sustained growth will remain central to achieving diversification goals and to strengthening the resilience of Saudi Arabia's tourism economy in the years ahead.

Employment in the Tourism Sector

By the end of 2024, the tourism sector employed approximately **966,531 people**, including **242,073 Saudi nationals**, of whom **45.8% were women**⁵⁹ compared to 5% in 2018. This reflects both the sector's expansion and a deliberate push to increase national participation.

Supported by dedicated upskilling and reskilling training courses under the AHLHA program, which aims to uplift Saudi youth skills in the tourism industry, more than 680,000 training opportunities from 2020 up to Q3 2025.



3.2 Tourism Training and Development Efforts

National Occupational Skills Standards

With the endorsement of Sectoral Skills Council, the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with SMEs and other private sector companies launched the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) for tourism in 2024. This framework serves as a comprehensive reference for organizations within the Travel & Tourism sector in Saudi Arabia. It provides employers with a structured foundation for benchmarking their workforce against industry standards, identifying the key skills needed as well as any skill gaps, and supporting employees with continuous development of the technical, behavioral, and leadership competencies that this evolving sector requires. By integrating NOSS into their workforce strategies, Travel & Tourism companies can enhance productivity, minimize skill mismatches, and build a competitive, future-ready workforce. Meanwhile, NOSS can help young professionals visualize their future in the sector and make plans accordingly.

Tourism Training Opportunities

- In collaboration with leading global institutions specializing in tourism—such as Les Roches in Switzerland, EHL, Glion Institute, and other renowned international tourism schools—the Ministry of Tourism offers annual training packages and programs. These initiatives are designed to enhance human capabilities in the tourism sector and empower young talents to enter this promising industry.
- From 2020 until Q3 2025, the Ministry of Tourism and its partners have delivered more than 680,000 training opportunities. These include local and international programs, leadership development initiatives, and on-the-job training. All training programs are continuously updated and made accessible through the MT Ahlha Training Platform

Tourism Education and Training International Accreditation

- Extensive efforts throughout 2024 by launching the world's largest accreditation campaign in collaboration with top global accreditation bodies (TedQual, Eurhodip, THE-ICE, and EQAA).
- A total of 44 international accreditations earned by tourism education programs and institutions.
- KSA is ranked #1 globally for the number of programs and institutions accredited by UN Tourism TedQual in 2024 and 2025, reflecting a remarkable achievement in positioning the Kingdom as a regional hub for excellence in tourism education.



Table 3.1 Employment-linked diploma programs

A set of various training programs linked to employment is being implemented, in collaboration with leading national and international tourism education institutions, to qualify Saudi talent for the tourism labor market:

The Artificial Intelligence in Hospitality Diploma Program, in partnership with NEOM, is offered by PwC Academy.

Two programs with Boutique Group: The Advanced Diploma in Hospitality offered by Les Roches, and the Advanced Diploma in Culinary Arts offered by École Ducasse.

Five programs in hospitality and entertainment, in partnership with Al-Qiddiya, are delivered through Bunyan and the Saudi Entertainment Academy.

Additional programs in hospitality, hotel management, and culinary arts are offered through Bunyan and ZADK Academy.

Table 3.2 Diploma programs

Six specialized vocational diploma programs have been introduced in collaboration with leading national and international tourism education institutions to develop skilled human capital and address the workforce demands of the tourism industry:

Diploma in Hospitality and Business Management (KFUPM): The first tourism program was delivered in KFUPM, launched in 2023, and the number of graduated 53 students in 2025.

Diploma in Travel and Tourism (Tabuk University): The program is designed in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic, a leading tourism institute. The program started in 2023, targeting to qualify 50 students. 50% of the students will have their practical training abroad. Graduation is scheduled to be held in December 2025.

Diploma in Health and Wellness Tourism Operations (Albaterji College): The first health and wellness tourism program in the Middle East. The program aims to qualify 100 nationals for employment at Red Sea Global.

Diploma in Travel and Tourism (Jeddah University): The program launched in August 2024. Over 50 students are enrolled in the program. The first cohort of students is scheduled to graduate in 2026.

Diploma in Hotel Management (King Saud university): the program is designed in collaboration with IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems. The program was launched in January 2025 and is targeting to qualify 50 students.

Diploma in Mountain Resorts (King Khaled University): The program is designed with Les Roches, a leading tourism institute. The program was launched in 2023, targeting to qualify 50 students. The graduation ceremony was held on May 6, 2025. Celebrate 15 top-performing students who trained at Les Roches/Switzerland.

Tourism Curriculum

The tourism and hospitality curriculum has been introduced for third-year secondary school students, to raise awareness of the tourism sector.

- Interactive self-learning tourism and hospitality content has been developed and approved by the National Curriculum Center.
- The content has been endorsed by the Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (a UNESCO center).

- A specialized teacher training program, designed to raise awareness about the tourism sector, was developed in collaboration with the National Institute for Educational Professional Development.
- The Tourism and Hospitality course have been activated on Madrasati platform in Aug 2025.

Nano degrees

The Ministry of Tourism, in partnership with the National Center for E-Learning, is delivering high-quality nanodegree programs with stackable, credit-bearing learning units. The year 2025 marked the launch of the first phase of five nano programs i with Umm Al-Qura University and the University of Jeddah, focusing on sustainable tourism and the role of artificial intelligence in the tourism and hospitality sectors, in partnership with the United Nations Tourism (UN Tourism). These programs are designed to encompass a wide range of vital and specialized fields, with a core focus on tourism. Consequently, our role at the Ministry of Tourism is to target the development of the emerging skills required by the modern tourism and hospitality sector.

On-job-training

500 beneficiaries will complete 1–3 months of on-the-job training by Q2 2026, using a specialized digital platform to connect students with identified training opportunities and manage the end-to-end training process, on-the-job training program will begin in June 2025.

The Executive Master's Degree

The Executive Master's Degree is a strategic collaboration with leading international tourism and hospitality institutions, designed to meet the evolving needs of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector. The program cultivates future leaders by focusing on key areas like hotel accommodation, travel agencies, and the food & beverage sector, ensuring graduates are equipped with specialized skills to drive growth and innovation. The program's target audience is 300 senior tourism professionals and is delivered in partnership with top-ranked universities: EHL (1st), Les Roches (2nd), and Glion (6th). These partnerships offer four distinct programs: the EHL Executive Master in Hospitality, the Les Roches Executive Master in International Hotel Management, the Les Roches Executive MBA in Global Hospitality Management, and the Glion Executive Master's in Luxury Management and Guest Experience. Program management is supported by a comprehensive dashboard that tracks participant performance and attendance and helps enhance satisfaction through monthly surveys, with a current satisfaction rate of 83%. This system also provides targeted support for participants with special needs and monitors the overall progress of both the program and the universities' contributions.



3.3 Investment Environment Reforms

Saudi Arabia has undertaken a series of reforms to enhance its investment climate and attract both domestic and foreign capital in line with its **Vision 2030** objectives. In the tourism sector, the government has introduced **competitive regulations, tax benefits** and **investment incentives** that reduce barriers to entry and promote long-term private sector participation.

Streamlined Regulatory Environment

Saudi Arabia has overhauled its **Investment Law**, transforming it into a comprehensive system that supersedes the previous foreign investment regulations. This strategic redesign aims to significantly boost international investment and ensure equitable treatment for both domestic and foreign investors. Moreover, it enhances investor rights by guaranteeing the rule of law, fair treatment, property rights, intellectual property protection, the freedom to manage investments and seamless fund transfers. To facilitate investment, the law simplifies the regulatory landscape by replacing the previous international investor licensing regime with a streamlined registration process. The new law is meticulously aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 and the objectives of the National Investment Strategy, while also incorporating global best practices and upholding the Kingdom's established investment principles.

The primary goals of this revamped legal framework are to increase the GDP and achieve economic diversification. It seeks to accomplish this by fostering the growth of key investment sectors, substantially increasing the private sector's contribution to GDP, and safeguarding the rights of all investors. This bold move underscores Saudi Arabia's commitment to creating a more attractive, transparent, and stable investment environment.

And in Tourism, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has amended its Tourism Law – issued in August 2022 – supplemented by ten wide-ranging implementing regulations covering Hotels, Hotel Management, Travel and



Makkah Gate, Jeddah

Tour, and others. This update to the law introduces a set of business supporting reforms from new license types in Travel and Tour agencies, to private home permits coupled with fee reductions for the licenses issued to further promote Tourism Investments.

In 2024, The Ministry of Tourism announced the “**Tourism Investment Enablers Program**” aimed towards having the most competitive investment landscape for tourism businesses. One flagship initiative is the “**Hospitality Investment Enables**”; Designed to support projects with significant contribution to the capacity and quality of overall hospitality offering.

The Hospitality Investment Enabler is a strategic initiative launched by the Ministry of Tourism to support private sector and accelerate growth in the hospitality sector in priority destination in the Kingdom. This initiative will be fostering significant social and economic growth aiming to add 42,000 room keys, unlocking a total investment of 42 billion and creating around 120,000 job opportunities across targeted destinations by 2030.

Aiming to support private sector investment in easing their cost of doing business. The Enabler under this initiative is a bundle of exemptions of governmental fees where it will substantially mitigate the risks associated with in the first years of operations which might as well improve the overall investment feasibility and its profitability accordingly. These exemptions are in the form of exemption from leasing costs for government-owned land, municipality tax “city tax”, VAT related to room night sales so is taxes applied for foreigner investments.

Additionally, the Ministry partnered with the Saudi Business Center to launch a sector focused branch for Tourism, delivering the following goals:

1. Facilitate the journey of investors interested in the tourism sector.
2. Raise the quality of services provided to investors interested in the tourism sector.
3. Increase the value and volume of investment in the tourism sector.
4. Support the private sector investors who are interested in the tourism sector.



Supported digitally through a Business Platform:

1. The SBC platform assists investors and business owners from both within and outside Saudi Arabia to start, operate, and grow their businesses.
2. To improve the investor's experience, the platform has automated an entire suite of governmental services.
3. Business Platform provides industry-leading solutions to the digitization of governmental-business transactions.

Another focus of the TIEP is Fees Restructuring and Reduction:

- Revised and restructured Ministry of Tourism's fees for Accommodation Sector, leading to reduced overall fees and enhancing the fee structure to accommodate size and classification.
- Revised and restructured Ministry of Tourism's fees and licensing types for Travel and Tour Sector.
- As a result, Ministry of Tourism fees were reduced by 50% to 70% and Introduced multiple Travel and Tour Organization Types with Competitive fees structure.
- Reducing further governmental fees directly related to hospitality sector, 100% reduction in fees captured by the Municipalities for commercial license in accommodation sector.

With continuous regulatory reforms to elevate investor journey through enhancing transparency and accessibility of laws and regulations with clear business requirements across all government stakeholders related to tourism activities.

Competitive Fiscal Regime

Saudi Arabia offers one of the most attractive **tax environments in the G20**. The **statutory corporate income tax rate is 20%** for foreign-owned companies, while local entities are subject to a **2.5% Zakat** on their base. Additional fiscal measures include:

Value Added Tax (VAT)

applicable at a standard rate

Exemptions or drawbacks on custom duties

for selected inputs and machinery

Social security contributions

required only for Saudi employees

Tax credits and payroll exemptions

for hiring and training Saudi nationals



al-Lawz mountain, Tabuk

Special Economic Zones and Strategic Support

Saudi Arabia has established **five Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** that offer tailored incentives such as tax holidays, customs duty exemptions, and flexible labour regulations. Strategically located and regulated by the **Economic Cities and Special Zones Authority (ECZA)**, these zones provide unique legislative and competitive advantages to attract high-quality investments and foster the development of strategic sectors, including tourism, logistics, and technology.

Special Economic Zones



Cloud Computing Special Economic Zone

Ras Al-Khair Special Economic Zone

Riyadh Integrated Special Logistics Zone

Jazan Special Economic Zone

King Abdullah Economic City Special Economic Zone

Source: Vision 2030, <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/explore/projects/special-economic-zones>.

As flagship initiatives under the **National Investment Strategy** and **Vision 2030**, the SEZs aim to stimulate economic diversification by encouraging technology transfer, enhancing entrepreneurship, and creating job opportunities that help develop local talent. In doing so, they contribute to boosting competitiveness, supporting industrial progress, and positioning the Kingdom as a pioneering global investment destination.

Complementing the SEZs, Saudi Arabia also offers a range of **financial support mechanisms**. The **Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF)** extends favourable loans for tourism-related infrastructure projects, while companies establishing regional headquarters in the Kingdom benefit from access to government contracts and potential funding opportunities through the **Public Investment Fund (PIF)**. Together, these measures strengthen the enabling environment for investors and accelerate the growth of vital sectors."

King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC)



Employment and Nationalization Incentives

To support talent development and workforce nationalization, a wide range of incentives are available for tourism sector entities to enhance employment opportunities for the Saudi workforce, in collaboration with the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF). These services aim to empower organizations to attract, develop, and retain national talent. They include:

- Employment and Wage Support
- Reskilling and Upskilling the Saudi Workforce
- Vocational and On-the-Job Training
- Professional Development and Certification
- Leadership Development
- Flexible Work and Freelancing Support

These and other support services are tailored to help organizations meet Nationalization goals while building a sustainable pipeline of skilled national talent within the tourism sector.

By 2030, the **Hospitality Sector Investment Enablers** under TIEP are expected to stimulate **SAR 42 billion (USD 11.2 billion)** in private investment, create **42,000 new hotel rooms**, and generate around **120,000 new jobs** across key destinations.

International Treaties and Investor Protection

Saudi Arabia is a member of the **WTO** and several regional trade blocs, including the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** and the **Greater Arab Free Trade Area**. It has signed:

- **Double Taxation Avoidance Treaties (DTAs)** with 29 countries
- **Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs)** with 23 countries

These agreements aim to facilitate **cross-border investment** and ensure **robust investor protection**.





Hisma Desert, Tabuk



4

WHY INVEST IN SAUDI ARABIA

4.1 Diverse Geography, Youthful Population and Rich Tourism Offering

Saudi Arabia's geography ranges from dramatic mountain ranges to extensive coastlines, and from fertile valleys to volcanic plains. These natural regions are not only environmentally significant — many of them are tourism destinations in their own right:



Mountains:

With more than **5,200** named peaks, including **Jabal Sawda** in the Asir region (3,015 m), the Kingdom offers unique hiking, paragliding and skiing.



Lakes and Volcanic Features: Natural lakes are usually formed during the rainy periods, these include **Al-Asfar** lake and **Al-Khararah** lake. Crater lakes such as **Al Wahbah** and ancient lava fields like **Harrat Khaybar** are also of growing interest for eco-tourists and geology enthusiasts.



Islands: The Kingdom is home to more than **1,450** virgin islands, particularly in the Red Sea, many of which are now being integrated into luxury tourism projects such as **The Red Sea Global**.



Valleys:

Over **120** wadis (valleys), such as **Wadi Lajab** and **Wadi Hanifah**, provide lush landscapes ideal for trekking, picnicking and nature-based tourism.

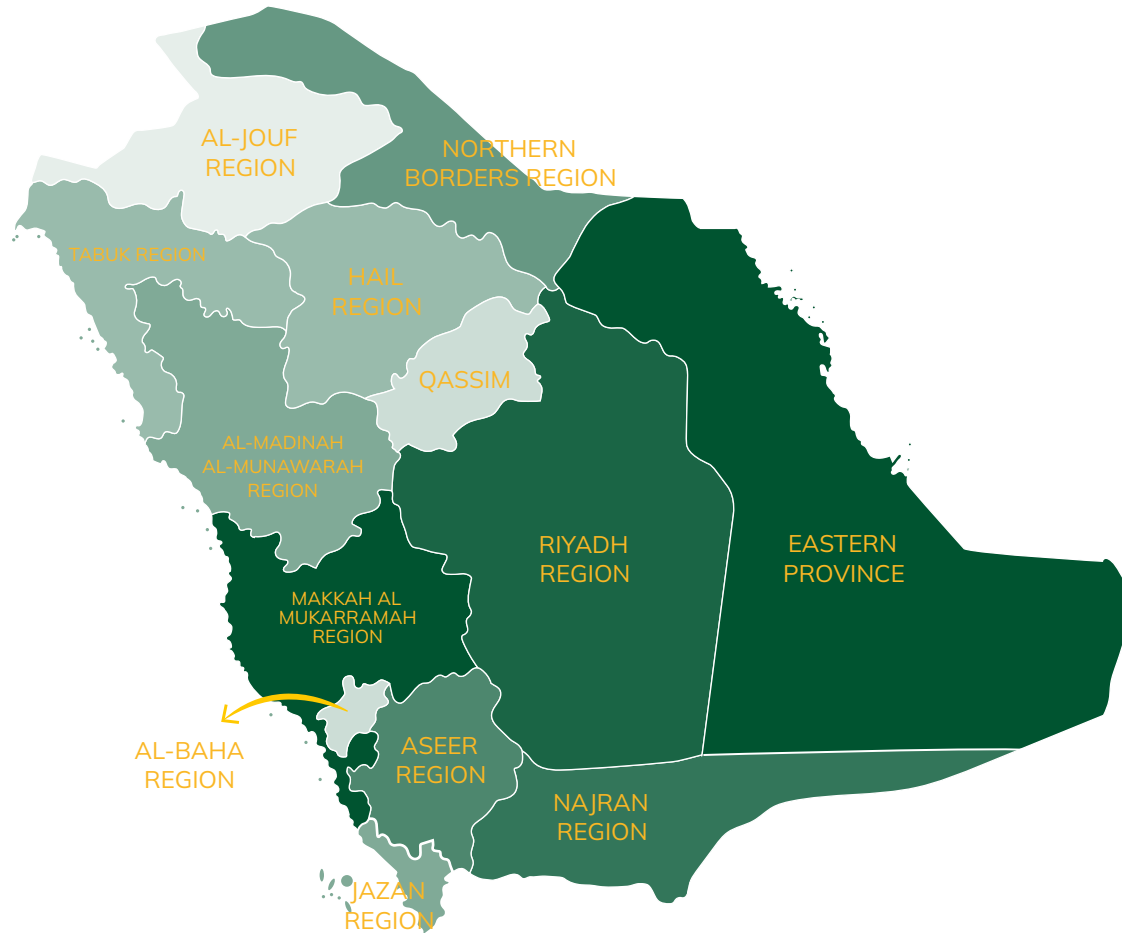


Coastlines: Saudi Arabia boasts over **3,000** km of pristine coastline on both the **Red Sea** and the **Arabian Gulf**, offering white-sand beaches, coral reefs and opportunities for diving, snorkelling and yachting.



Natural Reserves: Protected areas such as **Farasan Islands**, **Ibex Reserve**, and **Sharaan Nature Reserve** in AlUla are being developed with a focus on conservation and sustainable tourism.

Figure 4.1 Map of Saudi Arabia regions



Source: <https://mt.gov.sa/>



Key Tourism Destinations

Saudi Arabia features a range of destinations that represent different aspects of its tourism offering. These include major cities, heritage sites, coastal areas, and natural landscapes. The locations listed below are among the most developed or prioritised for tourism and reflect the country's geographic and cultural diversity⁶⁰:



Riyadh (Riyadh Province)

- Edge of the World
- At-Turaif District
- Salwa Palace
- Wadi Hanifa
- King Abdullah Financial District (KAFFD)
- Ibex Reserve
- Al Murabba Palace
- Al Masmak Fortress





Makkah
(Makkah Al
Mukarramah
Province)

Al Masjid Al Haram,
the largest mosque in the world
King Abdulaziz Complex
for the Holy Kaaba Kiswa
Clock Tower Museum
Makkah Museum
Hira Cultural District
Exhibition Of The Two Holy
Masjids Architecture



Madinah
(Al-Madinah
Al-Munawarah
Province)

Hijaz Railway
Al-Ras Al-Abbyad / Yanbu
Harrat Khaybar
Harrat Rahat



Al-Ula
(Al-Madinah
Al-Munawarah
Province)

Madain Saleh
Al-Ula Oldtown
Gharamel Al-Ula
Al-Feel Mountain





Jeddah
(Makkah Al Mukarramah Province)

Jeddah Old Town
The Royal Greens Golf & Country Club
Jeddah Yacht Club
Jeddah Corniche
Obhur beach



Damman & Khobar
(Eastern Province)

Fanateer Corniche
Tarout Island
Dammam Corniche
Al Khobar Corniche
The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture



Al Ahsa
(Eastern Province)

Souq Al Qaisariya
Qasr Ibrahim
Koot District
Al Qarah Hill & Village
Al Uqair Port
Al Asfar Lake
Al Ahsa Oasis & Springs





Asser
(Asser
Province)

Al Soudah Park and Mountain
Rijal Almaa Heritage Village
The Hanging Village of Al Habala
Al Yanfa Archaeological Village



Hail
(Hail
Province)

Hail Regional Museum
Hatim Al Tai Palace
Mount Hatima & Crater
Rock Art in the Hail Region



Qassim
(Qassim
Province)

Al Musawkaf Market
Khartam Park
Al Khabra Heritage Village
Date Farms





Al Jouf
(Al-Jouf
Province)

Dumat Al Jandal Lake
Marid Castle
Zaabal Castle



Taif
(Makkah Al
Mukarramah
Province)

Al Hada Mountains View
Al Hada Rose Farmlands
Al Shafa Mountains
Al Shafa Rose Farmlands
Souq Okaz



Al Baha
(Al-Baha
Province)

Thee Ain Heritage Village
Raghadan Forest
Walk/Khairah Forest Park
Old Baljurashi Markets
Aljanabain Valley/
Janabeen Dam







At-Turaif District in Diriyah, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

UNESCO Heritage and Environmental Recognitions

Saudi Arabia's cultural and natural wealth is increasingly recognised on the international stage. With **eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, **over a dozen elements inscribed as Intangible Cultural Heritage**, and **two biosphere reserves**, the Kingdom showcases a profound and evolving relationship between people, history, and landscape. These recognitions reinforce Saudi Arabia's potential to develop tourism rooted in authenticity, sustainability, and global significance.

I. World Heritage Sites

Saudi Arabia's UNESCO World Heritage properties reflect a continuum of human civilisation, environmental adaptation, and architectural ingenuity across centuries:



1. The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area (2024)

Situated on ancient Arabian trade routes, Al-Faw reveals 12,000 archaeological features ranging from Palaeolithic tools to Late pre-Islamic city remains. Key elements include rock carvings, sacred sites, caravanserais, and an early oasis water system — testament to millennia of adaptation and spiritual continuity.⁶¹



2. 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid (2023)

Located in the Rub' al-Khali, the world's largest expanse of windblown sand, the site preserves fragile desert ecosystems and has become a global model for species reintroduction, including the Arabian Oryx. Its topography supports rare flora and fauna while preserving Bedouin nomadic heritage.⁶²



3. Ḥimā Cultural Area (2021)

Along ancient caravan routes in the southwest, Ḥimā contains over 7,000 years of rock art, inscriptions in multiple languages, and archaeological remains including ancient wells that still function today — offering unique insights into trade, language, and resilience.⁶³



4. Al-Ahsa Oasis, an Evolving Cultural Landscape (2018)

Home to 2.5 million date palms, Al-Ahsa is the world's largest oasis and a symbol of environmental ingenuity. Its landscape of gardens, canals, historic buildings, and archaeological sites shows uninterrupted human habitation since the Neolithic era.⁶⁴



5. Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia (2015)

Petroglyphs at Jubbah and Shuwaymis span 10,000 years, illustrating early Arabian life. These sites preserve exceptional records of environmental shifts, animal domestication, and artistic expression.⁶⁵



6. Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah (2014)

A cosmopolitan port and pilgrimage hub since the 7th century, Jeddah's distinctive coral architecture and urban fabric reflect its role in Islamic history and Red Sea trade.⁶⁶



7. At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah (2010)

The cradle of the Saudi state, At-Turaif in Dir'iyah exemplifies Najdi architecture and political development in the 15th–18th centuries. Its restored palaces and urban layout mark the emergence of modern Saudi Arabia.⁶⁷



8. Madā'in Šāliḥ (Al-Hijr) Archaeological Site (2008)

Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO site, Madā'in Šāliḥ was a Nabataean city with monumental tombs and intricate façades carved into sandstone. It provides exceptional insight into pre-Islamic Arabian civilisations.⁶⁸





II. Intangible Cultural Heritage

In addition to its recognised built heritage, Saudi Arabia is home to a wide range of intangible cultural practices that form part of the broader socio-cultural environment in which tourism can develop. These elements reflect traditions linked to agriculture, oral expression, craftsmanship, social practices and performing arts. Many are shared with neighbouring countries, highlighting regional interconnectedness and cultural continuity.

As of 2025, the following elements have been inscribed by UNESCO on the **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**:



Al-Qatt Al-Asiri (2017) [Saudi Arabia](#)

A traditional female art form from the Asir region, involving intricate interior wall decoration using geometric patterns and bright colours. The practice is transmitted informally through generations and reflects women's role in preserving cultural identity.⁶⁹



Almezmar (2016) [Saudi Arabia](#)

A group performance involving drumming and dancing with sticks, practised by the Hijazi community on festive occasions. It is accompanied by clapping, chanting and poetry.⁷⁰



Alardah Alnajdiyyah (2015) [Saudi Arabia](#)

A traditional Najdi performance combining sword dancing, drumming, and poetic chanting. Historically performed before battle, today it marks national and social occasions.⁷¹



Majlis, a cultural and social space (2015) [Saudi Arabia](#), [Oman](#), [Qatar](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)

A central gathering space where community members meet to discuss social affairs, receive guests, and engage in collective decision-making.⁷²



Traditional weaving of Al Sadu (2020) [Saudi Arabia](#), [Kuwait](#)

A weaving tradition practised by Bedouin women, producing textiles used in tents and camel gear. The process is linked to tribal identity and pastoralist lifestyles.⁷³



Arabic calligraphy: knowledge, skills and practices (2021) [Saudi Arabia](#), [Algeria](#), [Bahrain](#), [Egypt](#), [Iraq](#), [Jordan](#), [Kuwait](#), [Lebanon](#), [Mauritania](#), [Morocco](#), [Oman](#), [State of Palestine](#), [Sudan](#), [Tunisia](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [Yemen](#)

An artistic expression of writing Arabic script to convey aesthetic harmony. Passed down through apprenticeships, it appears in architecture, manuscripts and crafts.⁷⁴



Falconry, a living human heritage (2021) [Saudi Arabia](#), [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Croatia](#), [Czechia](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), [Kazakhstan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Mongolia](#), [Morocco](#), [Netherlands](#), [Pakistan](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Qatar](#), [Republic of Korea](#), [Slovakia](#), [Spain](#), [Syrian Arab Republic](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)

A centuries-old tradition involving the training and flying of birds of prey, used historically for hunting and now for sport and cultural identity.⁷⁵



Alheda'a, oral traditions of calling camel flocks (2022) [Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates](#)

Polyphonic vocal expressions used by camel herders to guide and comfort their flocks. It integrates poetic forms and sometimes musical instruments.⁷⁶



Knowledge and practices related to cultivating Khawlani coffee beans (2022) [Saudi Arabia](#)

A farming tradition in southern Saudi Arabia involving the cultivation, harvesting and preparation of Khawlani coffee, embedded in local identity and hospitality.⁷⁷



Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices (2022) [Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen](#)

Knowledge surrounding the date palm tree, its cultivation and use, including in architecture, nutrition and handicrafts.⁷⁸



Arts, skills and practices associated with engraving on metals (gold, silver and copper) (2023) [Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen](#)

A form of decorative art involving intricate engraving on metal surfaces, reflecting social and religious meanings.⁷⁹



Harees dish: know-how, skills and practices (2023) [Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates](#)

Preparation of a traditional dish made from wheat, meat and ghee, often prepared during Ramadan and large gatherings.⁸⁰



Saudi coffee, a symbol of generosity (2024) [Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates](#)

Preparation and serving of Arabic coffee as a daily and ceremonial expression of hospitality in Arab societies.⁸¹



Semsemiah: instrument crafting and playing (2024) [Saudi Arabia, Egypt.](#)

A harp-like instrument played in coastal communities, particularly the Suez Canal region, used for community and religious gatherings.⁸²



Henna: rituals, aesthetic and social practices (2024) [Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen](#)

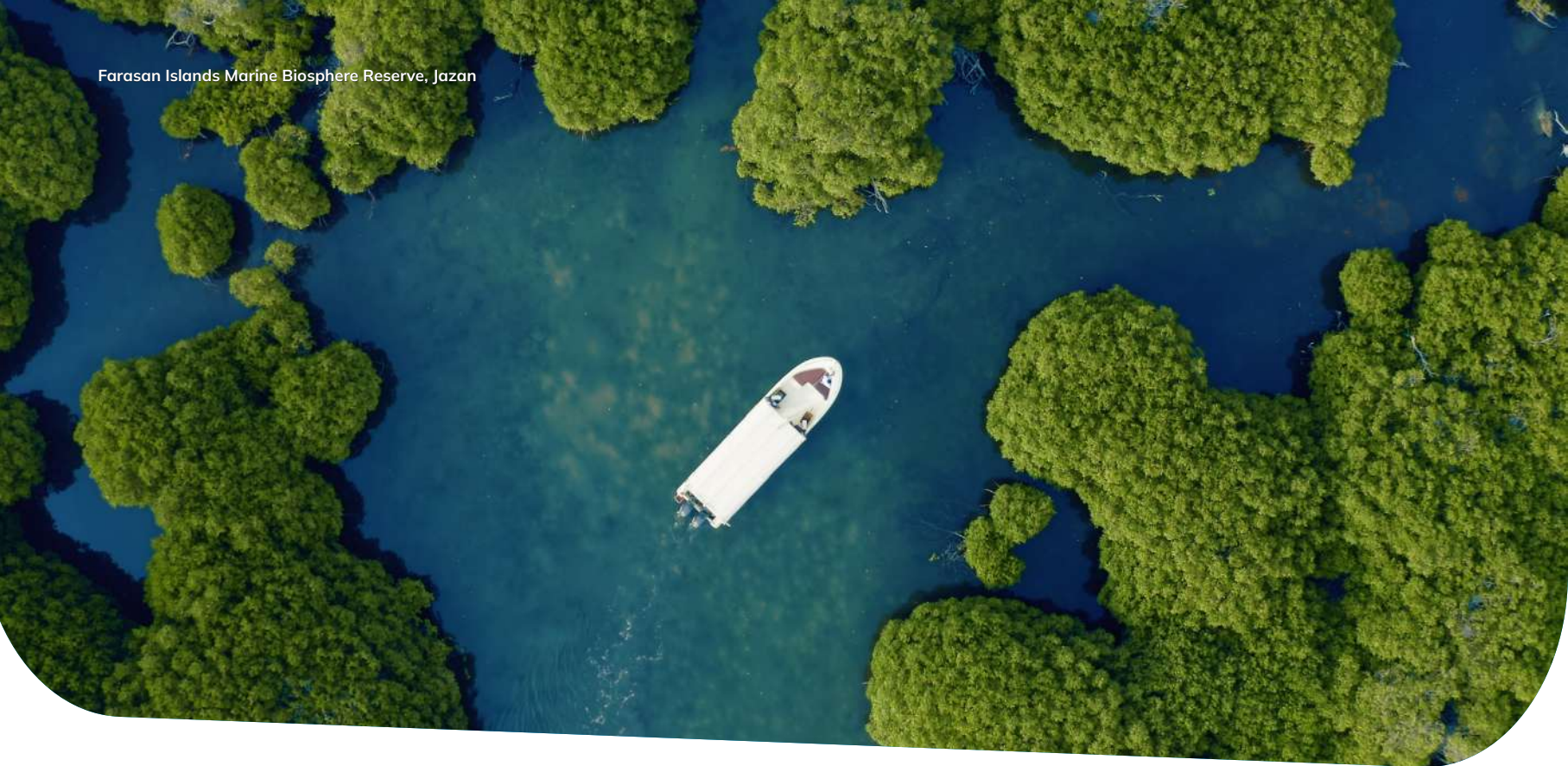
Aesthetic and ritual application of henna for weddings and celebrations, passed through generations by women.⁸³



Cultural practices related to Taif roses (2024) [Saudi Arabia](#)

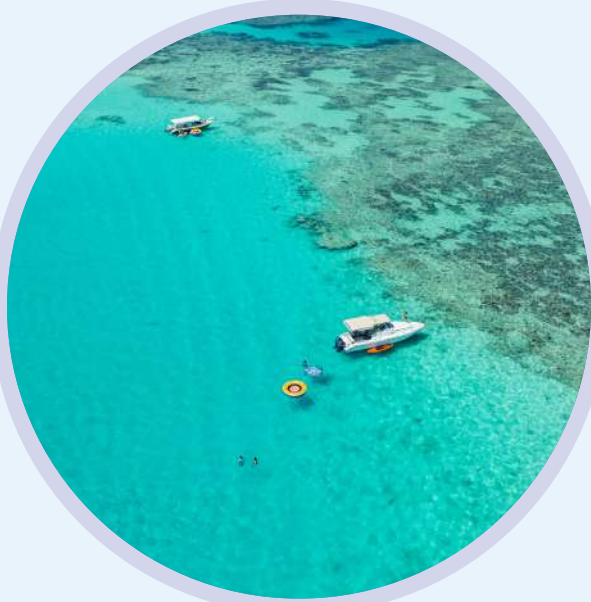
An agricultural and cultural practice in the Taif region, involving the seasonal cultivation, distillation and marketing of rosewater products.⁸⁴





III. Biosphere Reserves

As part of its commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable development, Saudi Arabia participates in UNESCO's **Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**, which promotes balanced relationships between people and nature. The country currently hosts **two designated biosphere reserves**, which include both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and offer long-term opportunities for research, education, and nature-based tourism investment.



1. Juzur Farasan (2021)

Situated in the southern Red Sea, the Farasan Islands represent Saudi Arabia's first marine biosphere reserve. The site covers nearly 577,000 hectares, of which over 500,000 hectares are marine ecosystems. It includes coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, and critical habitats for endangered species such as the dugong and the white-cheeked tern. Around 40,000 people live in the reserve, which also preserves a range of cultural practices and traditional livelihoods, particularly small-scale fishing.⁸⁵



2. Harrat Uwayrid (2022)

Located in the north-western part of the Kingdom, Harrat Uwayrid is a volcanic highland system covering over 762,700 hectares. It features a combination of mountainous terrain, lava fields, and arid valleys, supporting several endemic species and diverse ecosystems. The area is home to a resident population of approximately 40,500 people and represents a model of biodiversity conservation integrated with sustainable human activities.⁸⁶



Launched by UN Tourism in 2021, the **Best Tourism Villages** initiative recognises rural destinations that are outstanding examples of tourism's potential to preserve cultural heritage, promote local products and values, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Villages selected under this initiative meet criteria related to cultural and natural resources, community involvement, tourism development, and sustainability.

For Saudi Arabia, this recognition is particularly relevant as the country seeks to diversify its tourism offer beyond major urban centres and heritage megaprojects. Rural destinations contribute to national development goals by creating income opportunities in smaller communities, supporting the conservation of local traditions, and encouraging environmental stewardship. The initiative also aligns with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 objective to strengthen tourism as a driver of inclusive growth and regional development.

From adaptive reuse of historic buildings to sustainable agricultural practices and entrepreneurship support, the Saudi villages selected by UN Tourism provide **scalable case studies** for integrated investment in cultural tourism, heritage conservation, and rural economic development. They represent not only tourism destinations but also platforms for **pilot projects**, **MSME development**, and **green infrastructure** with the potential for replication across other rural areas of the country.

AIUla Old Town (2022)



Located in the Madinah Region, AIUla Old Town is situated within a larger cultural and natural heritage landscape. The village contains over 900 mudbrick buildings, of which more than 100 have been restored using traditional methods. It hosts an expanding arts district and promotes women's empowerment through heritage-based crafts training.

AIUla's local economy is being revitalised through structured support for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including retail spaces for locally branded products such as *Made in AIUla*. Employment schemes such as the **Rawi** programme (training residents as tour guides) and **Hammayah** (employing local guardians of the heritage landscape) have provided income to over 2,000 people.

Traditional farming systems, including qanat irrigation, are being restored to support food security and environmental resilience within the oasis. These combined efforts position AIUla as a model for integrated rural tourism investment.⁸⁷

Rijal Alma'a (2021)



Located in the Asir region near Abha, Rijal Alma'a is a historic settlement with over 1,000 years of history. Its distinctive multi-storey stone buildings reflect a unique architectural identity, sometimes referred to as the "gingerbread village" due to their appearance. Historically a major waypoint for trade and pilgrimage routes, the village continues to celebrate its multicultural roots.

The site is undergoing a heritage-led regeneration process, involving public-private partnerships and national heritage institutions. Investments focus on adaptive reuse of historic structures, development of cultural tourism routes, and support for traditional attire and crafts such as the *futa* skirt and floral headwear known as the "Flower Men" tradition.

Its proximity to Al-Soudah and Abha positions it strategically within broader regional tourism circuits.⁸⁸

Abo Noghta Castles & Historic Tabab (2024)



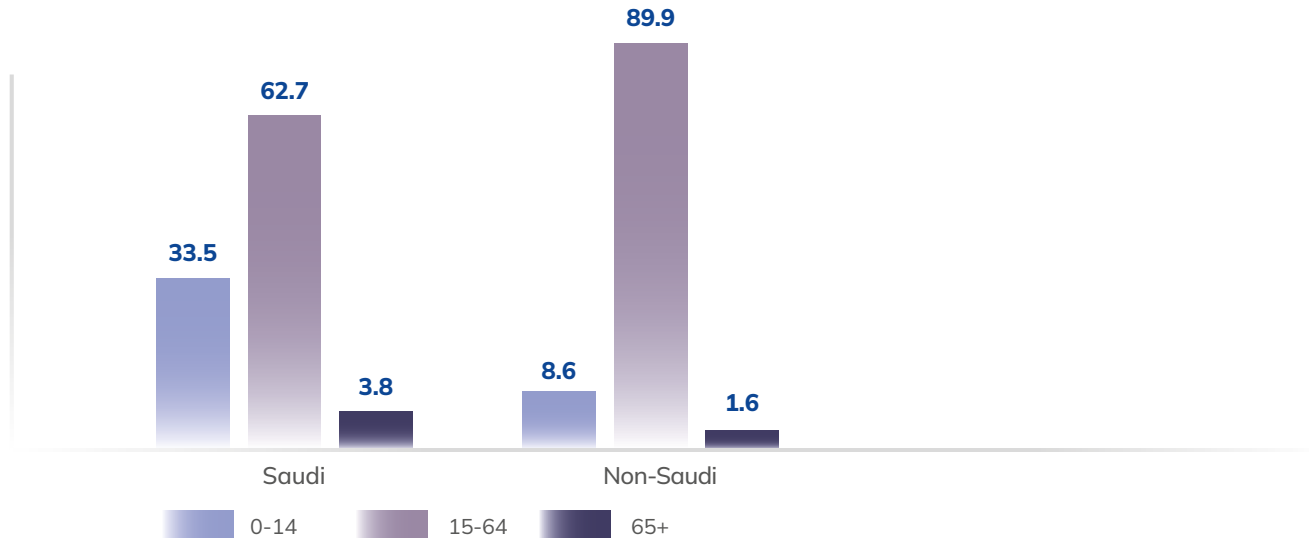
Recognised in 2024, this historic cluster in the Aseer region is notable for its sustainable heritage restoration model. Instead of using new materials, the local community reuses and recycles existing ones, reducing the environmental impact of renovation. This approach has inspired broader sustainable practices across the region.

The area supports a strong agricultural economy based on crop diversity and traditional livestock practices. Its centuries-old seed preservation system, involving deep rock structures (*Al-mdafin*), exemplifies indigenous knowledge relevant for climate resilience and local food systems.

While still emerging as a tourism destination, the village presents opportunities for investment in eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, and rural enterprise development.⁸⁹

A Young and Growing Population

The population of Saudi Arabia is growing steadily, reaching an estimated 35.3 million people by mid-2024. 72.8% of the population is of working age. With 63% of Saudis under 30 and a median age of 29—significantly younger than in other major FDI destinations—the Kingdom offers a vibrant and future-oriented talent base.



Source: General Authority for Statistics, GASTAT (2025)

This young demographic is central to the future of tourism in Saudi Arabia. With one-third of Saudi citizens under the age of 14, the Kingdom is nurturing a large cohort of future travellers, consumers, and workers who will drive demand for leisure, entertainment, and cultural experiences in the coming years. For investors, this means a rapidly expanding domestic market alongside a growing workforce that will support the development of new destinations and services. In line with Vision 2030, this youthful population is set to become both the backbone of the tourism labour market and a powerful engine of demand, making Saudi Arabia an exceptionally attractive environment for long-term investment in the sector.

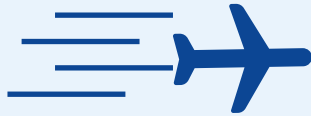


4.2 Location, Connectivity, and World-Class Infrastructure

Saudi Arabia's strategic location, extensive connectivity, and robust infrastructure are key factors enhancing its appeal as a prime destination for tourism investment. These elements not only facilitate seamless travel but also support the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 objectives to diversify its economy and boost the tourism sector.

Strategic Geographic Location

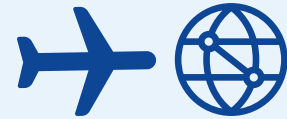
Situated at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, Saudi Arabia offers unparalleled access to major global markets:



Proximity to over **50** rapidly growing markets within a **4-hour flight radius**.



Access to more than **40%** of the world's GDP within a **6-hour flight**.



Reach to over half of the global population within a **7-hour flight**.⁹⁰



Road Infrastructure

Saudi Arabia boasts an extensive road network that facilitates seamless travel across the country. The Ministry of Transport and Logistics Services oversees approximately 73,288 kilometers of roads, including 4,261 kilometers of highways, 14,686 kilometers of dual roads⁹⁹, and 54,341 kilometers of single roads. This network connects major cities, tourist attractions, and border crossings, enabling efficient movement for both residents and visitors.

Global Ranking: According to the **World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2023**, Saudi Arabia ranked **4th globally among G20 countries** in the **Road Quality Index (RQI)**, reflecting the country's strong performance in both the extent and quality of its road infrastructure. Recent investments have focused on expanding and upgrading road infrastructure to meet the demands of increased tourism. Projects include the construction of new highways, bridges, and tunnels, as well as the implementation of intelligent transportation systems to enhance safety and efficiency. These developments are crucial for supporting the Kingdom's tourism sector and ensuring a positive experience for travellers.

Air Connectivity

Saudi Arabia's air transport sector has undergone major expansion to support the goals of Vision 2030 and accommodate the growing volume of domestic and international travellers. As of 2024, the Kingdom operates 29 airports, including 10 international, 3 regional, and 16 domestic airports. These facilities handled over **128 million passengers** in 2024, reflecting a **15% increase** compared to 2023 and a **45.8% increase** since the launch of Vision 2030.⁹¹



Passenger Traffic and Capacity⁹²



International passengers:
69 million



Average daily domestic passengers:
162,000



Domestic passengers:
59 million



Average daily international passengers:
189,000



Total **annual passenger handling capacity** across all airports reached **126 million⁹³**, with key facilities operating at near-maximum utilisation:

- **King Abdulaziz International Airport (JED):** Capacity 50 million, usage 98%, passengers: 49 million.
- **King Khalid International Airport (RUH):** Capacity 39 million, usage 96%, passengers: 37.6 million.
- **King Fahd International Airport (DMM):** With expansion plans, the airport can eventually handle up to 25 million passengers per year⁹⁴, passengers: 12.8 million.⁹⁵



Route Connectivity (2024)

- **King Abdulaziz International Airport:** 369 international routes
- **Prince Mohammad bin Abdulaziz International Airport:** 272 international routes
- **King Khalid International Airport:** 165 international routes
- **King Fahd International Airport:** 85 international routes⁹⁶

Flights and Airline Operations⁹⁷

In 2024, flight operations were as follows:

Domestic flights:



Saudi carriers:

412,000 flights / **58** million passengers



Foreign carriers:

1,584 flights / **49,000** passengers



General aviation:

60,000 flights / **1.1** million passengers

International flights:



Saudi carriers:

152,000 flights / **28** million passengers



Foreign carriers:

266,000 flights / **41** million passengers



General aviation:

13,000 flights / **80,000** passengers





Air Connectivity Program (ACP)

Established in 2021, the ACP aims to enhance Saudi Arabia's air connectivity by:

Developing new international routes: Since its inception, over 82 new direct air routes have been established.

Increasing seat capacity: In the first quarter of 2025, ACP added over 884,000 seats to support Umrah and visitation travel, with a target of reaching 2.5 million seats by year-end.⁹⁸

Attracting international carriers: The program has successfully attracted airlines such as Virgin Atlantic China Southern, Air China, China Eastern, Hainan Airlines, ITA Airways, Cathay Pacific, British Airways, Eurowings, Transavia, and Wizz Air.

Strategic targeted Source Markets: Saudi Arabia's National Tourism Strategy aims ambitiously to attract approximately 150 million visitors by 2030, with an expectation that 80% of this figure will comprise international travellers. The Air Connectivity Program (ACP) serves as a crucial enabler for this strategy, working to achieve its strategic targets by significantly enhancing air connectivity with key international markets. Specifically, ACP is focused on strengthening air connectivity with 33 strategic source markets, encompassing G20 nations and prominent global metropolises such as the U.S., China, Russia, the U.K., Germany, France Japan. **Road Infrastructure**



Rail Connectivity

The Saudi railway network is undergoing rapid expansion to provide alternative transportation options for tourists and residents. Currently, the network spans over 5,150 kilometres, with plans to extend it to more than 8,544 kilometres in the coming years.

- **Riyadh Metro:** The Riyadh Metro project, upon completion, will feature six lines spanning 176 kilometres, aiming to serve 3 million passengers daily.
- **Passenger Services:** The Haramain High-Speed Railway connects the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, significantly reducing travel time and enhancing the pilgrim experience.
- **Freight Transport:** Over 7 million metric tons of minerals are transported annually across key industrial hubs.

Key projects include the North-South Railway, which stretches 2,750 kilometers from Riyadh to the Jordanian border, and the Haramain High-Speed Railway, connecting the holy cities of Mecca and Medina over a distance of 450 kilometers.

These rail developments aim to offer efficient, comfortable, and environmentally friendly travel options, reducing reliance on road transport and enhancing connectivity between major urban centers and tourist destinations. The expansion of the rail network aligns with the Kingdom's broader objectives of economic diversification and sustainable development.



Riyadh North Railway Station



Maritime Infrastructure

Saudi Arabia's strategic location along vital maritime routes has led to the development of a robust port infrastructure. The Kingdom operates 13 ports, including major ones like Jeddah Islamic Port, King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam, and King Abdullah Port. These ports collectively handle approximately 320.78 million tonnes of cargo annually, reflecting a 14.45% year-on-year increase.

- **Ports:** The Kingdom has 13 ports, processing over 13 million containers annually, making up the largest maritime network in the Middle East.
- **Strategic Waterways:** Approximately 13% of global trade passes through the Red Sea, underscoring Saudi Arabia's strategic maritime position.

As part of its long-term logistics strategy, Saudi Arabia aims to significantly expand its maritime and logistics capabilities by 2030. Targets include increasing **port capacity to over 40 million standard containers**, boosting the **Kingdom's share of the transshipment market to 45%**, and raising **port occupancy to 70%** of total capacity. The strategy also focuses on improving the country's global rankings, including advancing to **80th place on the UNCTAD index**, achieving a **Logistics Performance Index score of 4.01**, and reaching **10th place globally in the Logistics Services Index**. Additional goals include increasing the number of **re-export logistics centres to 30** and improving the Kingdom's position in the **Cross-Border Trade Index to 35th place globally**.¹⁰⁰



Red Sea



4.3 Transformative Projects and Events Redefining Tourism

Giga-Projects in the Tourism Sector

Saudi Arabia's giga-projects are not just large-scale developments—they represent a bold reimagining of what tourism can be in the 21st century. Conceived as cornerstones of **Vision 2030**, these initiatives reflect the Kingdom's ambition to diversify its economy, reduce dependence on oil, and position itself as a global hub for sustainable, experience-driven tourism.

For investors, these projects offer **unprecedented entry points** into one of the fastest-growing tourism markets in the world. Unlike traditional tourism developments, Saudi Arabia's giga-projects are master-planned from the ground up with integrated infrastructure, technology, and governance frameworks designed to attract long-term investment. Backed by the **Public Investment Fund (PIF)**, ensuring financial stability and institutional oversight, they open up opportunities for public-private partnerships and foreign direct investment.

From **NEOM's high-tech urbanism** to the **Red Sea's regenerative tourism model**, from the **cultural revival of Diriyah and AIUla** to the **luxury positioning of AMAALA** and **entertainment-focused Qiddiya**, each project presents a distinct value proposition for different investor profiles—whether in hospitality, infrastructure, sustainability, cultural industries, or emerging technologies.

These giga-projects also serve as **global showcases** of how tourism can lead economic transformation while promoting heritage preservation, environmental stewardship, and inclusive development.



The Red Sea Project is a major tourism development located on Saudi Arabia's west coast, covering an area of 28,000 km² and comprising over 90 islands, desert landscapes, mountain canyons, dormant volcanoes, and coral reefs. The project is being developed by Red Sea Global, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), and forms part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy to diversify the national economy.

The development includes the construction of 50 hotels offering a total of 8,000 rooms, along with 1,000 residential properties, to be completed by 2030. The first phase became operational in 2023, with 3,000 rooms distributed across 16 hotels on four islands and two inland locations. A dedicated airport (Red Sea International Airport) will serve the area.

The project integrates a strong environmental component: 75% of the archipelago will remain undeveloped, and 9 islands have been designated as special conservation zones. The design and operations adopt regenerative principles with a focus on environmental protection and community benefit. The Red Sea Project is expected to contribute USD 5.3 billion annually to Saudi Arabia's GDP from 2030 and generate approximately 70,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs. Around 1,000 contracts have already been signed, representing commitments exceeding USD 6.7 billion. The site is projected to receive up to 1 million visitors per year once fully operational.





AMAALA is a high-end tourism development located on the northwestern coast of Saudi Arabia along the Red Sea. Covering approximately 4,000 km² within the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Natural Reserve, AMAALA is positioned as an integrated wellness and luxury destination focused on health, culture, art, and marine-based experiences.

The project is being developed in phases, with the first focused on the **Triple Bay** masterplan. This initial stage includes eight hotels offering around 1,300 rooms, with openings scheduled from 2024. Upon completion in 2027, AMAALA is expected to include over 3,000 rooms across 25 hotels, 943 residential villas, a yacht club, wellness and sports facilities, cultural attractions, and high-end retail and dining establishments.

AMAALA is designed as a low-impact, year-round destination operating on 100% renewable energy, with a zero-carbon footprint and no landfill waste. Only 5% of the total area will be developed, ensuring preservation of the surrounding marine and desert ecosystems. It also integrates the **Marine Life Institute**, a research and visitor centre dedicated to the Red Sea's biodiversity.

The project is expected to attract 500,000 visitors annually and generate an estimated contribution of USD 2.9 billion to Saudi Arabia's GDP once fully operational. It will create approximately 50,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs. To date, over 300 contracts have been awarded, exceeding USD 1.7 billion in value.

From an investment standpoint, AMAALA offers opportunities in high-end hospitality, wellness, cultural infrastructure, residential real estate, and premium retail, aligned with Vision 2030's objective to develop niche tourism segments and attract international visitors.



نيوم NEOM



NEOM is a large-scale development in northwest Saudi Arabia that forms a core component of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy. Covering an area of 26,500 km² along 468 km of Red Sea coastline and encompassing 41 islands, NEOM is designed as a new economic and urban model integrating technology, sustainability, and livability.

The project is structured around several distinct zones, each with different functions and relevance for tourism and investment:

THE LINE: A linear smart city extending over 170 km, designed to accommodate 9 million residents within a car-free, zero-emission environment.

Sindalah: A luxury island destination targeting the marine tourism and high-end hospitality segments, with hotels, golf courses, and a yacht marina.

Trojena: A mountain tourism destination featuring year-round outdoor sports, including a ski slope, as well as hospitality, wellness and cultural infrastructure.

Magna: A coastal zone under development with an expected focus on nature, culture and wellness experiences. NEOM is powered entirely by renewable energy and incorporates strict environmental and urban planning principles. The four natural zones — coastal area, coastal desert, mountains, and high valleys — are to be preserved and integrated into the development's design. From a tourism investment perspective, NEOM presents opportunities across multiple segments: luxury hospitality, eco-tourism, mountain and marine tourism, sport and cultural events, and urban experience tourism. Its infrastructure is planned to accommodate both domestic and international visitors, supported by advanced mobility solutions and digital infrastructure.

الدرعية DIRIYAH



Diriyah is a heritage-led urban development located just northwest of Riyadh. The project centres around the restoration and activation of the historic At-Turaif district — a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of the First Saudi State — and aims to establish Diriyah as a major cultural and tourism destination rooted in traditional Najdi architecture and identity. The development spans several integrated components, including residential neighbourhoods, museums, cultural institutions, commercial zones, and hospitality offerings.

Over 38 hotels and resorts are currently under construction, complemented by more than 20,000 residential units designed in traditional Najdi style. The project also includes 9 museums, 31 mosques, 16 schools, 8+ public parks, and major public spaces such as King Salman Square. By 2030, Diriyah is expected to receive more than 50 million visits annually and house over 100,000 residents. Key sites include At-Turaif, Wadi Hanifah (with 2.5 km² of restored land), Bujairi Terrace, and several cultural landmarks such as the House of Al Saud Museum. In total, more than 10 iconic landmarks are planned, alongside 4 metro stations and 60,000+ parking spaces.

The project incorporates sustainability and heritage preservation as core principles, with initiatives targeting energy efficiency, water conservation, and climate resilience. It is also a major contributor to employment creation, with a projected 178,000 direct jobs. From an investment perspective, Diriyah presents opportunities across cultural tourism, heritage-based hospitality, real estate, retail, events infrastructure, and education, positioning it as a key enabler of tourism diversification in line with Vision 2030.

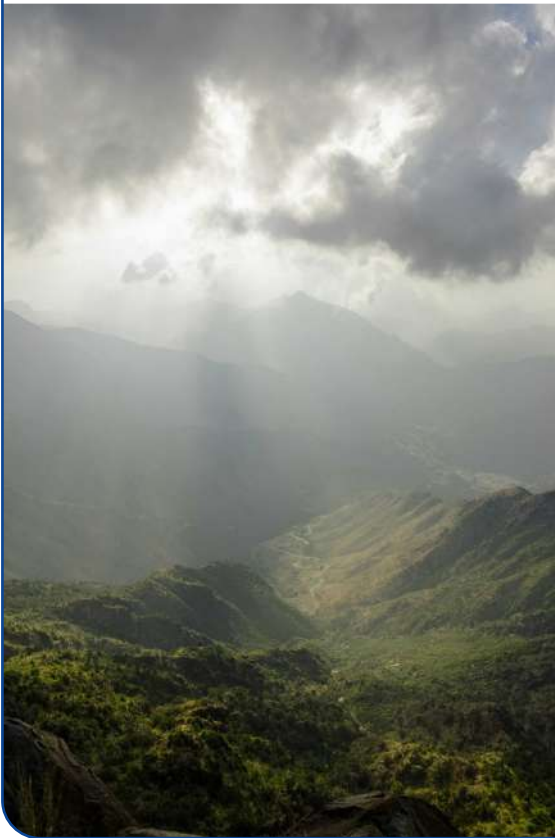
الأولياء ALULA



AlUla is a cultural and heritage tourism destination in northwestern Saudi Arabia, home to the Kingdom's first UNESCO World Heritage Site — the Nabataean city of Hegra — and over 200,000 years of human history. The area also includes the ancient cities of Dadan and AlUla Old Town, positioning it as a key site for archaeological, cultural, and nature-based tourism. Under the management of the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), the development is centred on a sustainable, long-term strategy that combines heritage preservation with tourism, arts, education, and economic development. Efforts are being made to open the destination to both international and domestic visitors while maintaining the integrity of its natural and historical assets.

Key initiatives include the Sharaan Nature Reserve, the Wadi AlFann open-air art landscape, the Artist Residency Programme, and Maraya, the world's largest mirrored building, which serves as a cultural venue. AlUla also hosts annual programming under AlUla Moments and supports conservation through projects like the Global Fund for the Arabian Leopard. AlUla is expected to welcome 2 million visitors annually and contribute over USD 31.9 billion to Saudi Arabia's GDP. The project will generate approximately 38,000 jobs, with additional focus on local capacity-building through education and training, including the AlUla Scholarship Programme and the Hammayah community engagement programme.

As a tourism investment destination, AlUla offers opportunities in heritage hospitality, cultural programming, sustainable transport, ecotourism infrastructure, and creative industries — in line with Vision 2030's ambition to position Saudi Arabia as a leading global destination for culture, history, and nature-based travel.



Soudah is a transformative mountain tourism development in Saudi Arabia's Asir region, centered around Jabal Soudah — the country's highest peak at 3,015 meters above sea level.

The project spans approximately 627 km² across Soudah and parts of the Rijal Almaa area, set within a rich natural and cultural landscape of forests, heritage villages, jagged ridgelines, and valleys. Under the master plan, the development will unfold over three phases. By 2033, the project is expected to deliver: 2,700 hospitality keys (hotel rooms and resort units), 1,336 residential units and 80,000 m² of commercial space.

Importantly, only a very small fraction (less than 1%) of the total land area will be developed, reflecting a strict commitment to preserving the region's natural environment and biodiversity.

The development is structured around six zones — Tahlal, Sahab, Sabrah, Jareen, Rijal, and Red Rock — each designed to integrate luxury hotels, villas, residential chalets, commercial and entertainment attractions, and nature-based amenities.

Sustainability lies at the core of Soudah's vision. The project emphasizes water conservation, waste management, emissions control, clean energy use, and nature-based design solutions to minimize environmental impact. The master plan respects the cultural and heritage fabric of the region: over 200 documented heritage sites (including traditional houses, watchtowers, mosques, forts) lie within the development zone and are being preserved and incorporated into the visitor experience.

By integrating conservation, luxury hospitality, and community benefit, Soudah Peaks is positioned to become Saudi Arabia's premier mountain tourism destination, contributing to the Kingdom's long-term goals of economic diversification and sustainable growth.



King Salman Park is one of Riyadh's flagship Vision 2030 projects, set to become the world's largest urban park, covering more than 16 km² in the heart of the capital. Built on the site of the former Riyadh air base, it is designed as a green and cultural hub, directly connected to five metro stations and ten bus stops.

The master plan dedicates around 11 km² to green and landscaped areas, with over one million trees and a central 7.2 km urban loop for walking and cycling. Key components include the Royal Arts Complex — home to a Museum of World Cultures, a National Theater, cinemas, and arts academies — as well as the 90,000 m² Visitor Pavilion.

Development will also integrate residential, commercial, and hospitality zones, supported by a real estate fund targeting over 1,500 housing units and 140,000 m² of leasable space. Sustainability is central, with strategies for water conservation, energy efficiency, and microclimate design to enhance livability.

By combining nature, culture, and community life, King Salman Park is set to redefine Riyadh's urban landscape and significantly contribute to the Kingdom's goals of quality of life, economic diversification, and environmental sustainability.



Qiddiya is an ambitious entertainment, sports, and cultural development located about 40 kilometres southwest of Riyadh. Covering an area of around 360 km², the project is designed as Saudi Arabia's capital of entertainment and is being developed by the Qiddiya Investment Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund, under the framework of Vision 2030.

The master plan integrates 25 districts combining theme parks, water parks, motorsport facilities, sports arenas, cultural venues, and residential communities. Among its flagship attractions are Six Flags Qiddiya, featuring the world's longest and fastest roller coaster, Aquarabia, the Kingdom's first large-scale water park, and a world-class motorsports circuit. The project will also host the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Stadium, a state-of-the-art venue with a retractable pitch, as well as the world's first Dragon Ball theme park.

By 2030, Qiddiya is expected to attract more than 17 million visitors annually, create over 300,000 jobs, and make a substantial contribution to Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP. Sustainability is built into the development, with green buffers, integration with the surrounding terrain, and smart mobility systems forming part of the urban design.

By combining global attractions with cultural and community experiences, Qiddiya is set to redefine entertainment and leisure in the Kingdom, strengthening Riyadh's position as a leading global city and contributing to the wider goals of diversification and quality of life under Vision 2030.

شركة
تطوير
البلد
Al Balad Development Co.



Al Balad, Jeddah's centuries-old historic core, is being transformed into a vibrant cultural, economic, and heritage destination under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. As a UNESCO-recognized World Heritage site, it is characterized by coral stone tower houses, intricately carved wooden roshan balconies, and narrow labyrinthine alleys that once served as a thriving Red Sea trading port.

The master plan covers approximately 2.5 million m² of development area, with a total built-up area reaching 3.7 million m². This includes 9,300 residential units, 1,800 hotel units, and about 1.3 million m² of commercial and office space.

Restoration of historic assets is central: the project aims to preserve over 600 heritage buildings, including traditional houses, mosques, and markets, integrating them into mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly settings.

Sustainability and cultural integrity are guiding principles. Regulatory frameworks, heritage protections, and eco-sensitive design standards are enforced to maintain Al Balad's character even as new infrastructure and amenities are introduced.

By combining conservation, modern infrastructure, and a reactivated cultural economy, Jeddah Al Balad is being repositioned as a living heritage center — one that draws residents, entrepreneurs, and tourists alike, restoring the district's historic prominence and anchoring Jeddah's identity as a global destination.



وسط جدة
JEDDAH CENTRAL



Jeddah Central is a visionary urban transformation project in the heart of Jeddah. Spanning 5.7 km² and fronting 9.5 km of Red Sea coastline, it seeks to redefine the city's waterfront, culture, and urban life.

The project aspires to deliver by 2030: 17,000 residential units, 2,700 hotel rooms, and four landmark institutions — a grand stadium, opera house, oceanarium (with coral farms), and a museum repurposed from a desalination plant.

The stadium will host up to about 45,000 spectators and is slated for completion in 2027, also positioned as a venue for the 2034 FIFA World Cup. The museum will convert the old desalination facility into a hybrid space for exhibitions, studios, and creative workshops — blending the city's industrial heritage with future culture.

Jeddah Central also plans a 2.1 km sandy beach, a marina for up to 500 berths, and extensive public realm work, with about 40% of the area dedicated to open green spaces and sustainable landscapes. The architectural and urban design approach seeks to integrate modern forms with elements drawn from Hijazi heritage and the historic Al Balad district.

By weaving together iconic architecture, public spaces, cultural assets, waterfront vitality, and sustainable urbanism, Jeddah Central aims to anchor Jeddah's future as a global destination — transforming central Jeddah into a dynamic centerpiece of Saudi Arabia's next chapter.

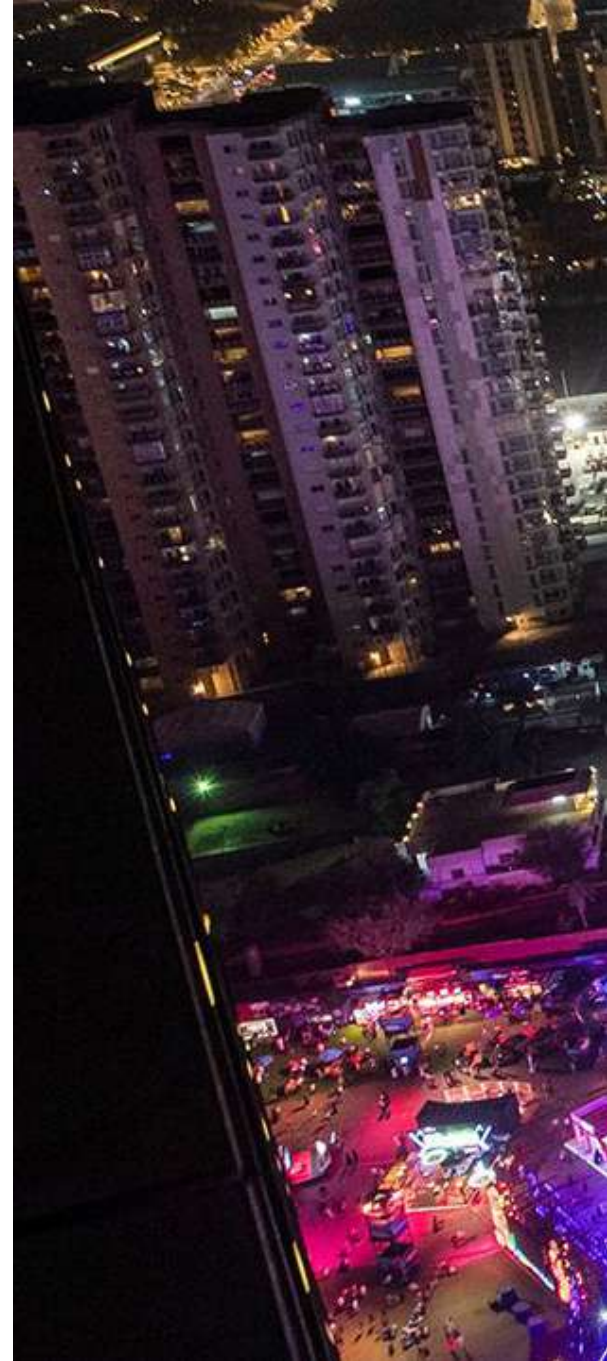
Major events shaping the future of tourism

In addition to the major giga projects, a growing calendar of international sports, cultural, and entertainment events is reshaping Saudi Arabia's tourism landscape.

Over the past few years, the Kingdom has hosted headline concerts, international film festivals, global sporting competitions, and seasonal showcases such as Riyadh Season, Jeddah Season, and AIUla Moments. These events have brought world-class artists, musicians, athletes, and creators to Saudi Arabia, positioning the country on the global cultural map and attracting visitors from across the region and beyond.

Looking ahead, the calendar is set to expand even further. Upcoming highlights include **EXPO 2030**, its main theme is "The Era of Change: Together for a Foresighted Tomorrow," focusing on technology, sustainability, and prosperous people. The event aims to showcase global innovation, foster cooperation, and aligns with Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 transformation plan. Also, the **FIFA World Cup 2034**, which will make Saudi Arabia the first nation to host the expanded 48-team tournament alone, as well as major international competitions in motorsport, esports, and athletics. In parallel, flagship cultural initiatives — from international theatre productions and concerts to art biennales and heritage festivals— will continue to enrich the visitor experience and showcase the Kingdom's creative industries.

This bold vision for the future builds upon a strong foundation of already established international events and gatherings. The nation currently hosts a diverse portfolio of major sporting spectacles, including the grueling **Rally Dakar**, the **F1 Grand Prix**, and **Formula E** races, alongside premier golf with the Saudi International and elite sports like the women's tennis tournament Finals. Traditional culture is celebrated with significant heritage events such as the King Abdulaziz Falconry Festival and the **King Abdulaziz Camel Festival**. On the business and technology front, the Future Investment Initiative (FII), Leap Tech conference, and Cityscape anchor the calendar, complementing forums like the Biban Forum (SME's) to drive economic growth. The Kingdom also has a massive presence in music with MDLBEAST and is set to host major continental sports with the **AFC Asian Cup 2027** and the **Asian Winter Games 2029**.







4.4 Government Support and Vision for Growth

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has placed tourism at the centre of its national transformation agenda, making it a cornerstone of the Saudi Vision 2030. This commitment is part of a broader government-led effort to stimulate private sector growth, diversify the national economy, and enhance competitiveness across non-oil sectors. The same reform-driven approach that has advanced progress in logistics, digital infrastructure, culture, and entertainment is now being applied to tourism—with coordinated policies, ambitious targets, and a strong institutional framework to support implementation.

For investors, this environment represents not only a sectoral opportunity but also the advantages of operating within a broader national ecosystem that prioritises reform, transparency, and private sector partnership. Recognising the sector's potential to drive economic diversification, job creation, and cultural exchange, the government has launched an ambitious suite of reforms, institutions, and strategies to catalyse tourism-led growth and facilitate investment.

National Tourism Strategy (NTS)

Launched in 2019, the **National Tourism Strategy (NTS)** is the guiding framework for Saudi Arabia's tourism development. It aims to transform the Kingdom into a global tourism destination by capitalising on its cultural heritage, natural diversity, and strategic location. The NTS is structured in two phases:



Phase 1 – “Discover Saudi” (2019–2023):
Pre-giga project stage aimed at building foundational infrastructure and opening the sector.



Phase 2 – “Experience Saudi” (2023–2030):
Post-giga project launch, focusing on delivering enhanced visitor experiences and increasing capacity.

Key targets of the NTS include



150 million total visits by 2030
(domestic and international)



Creation of 1.6 million jobs



Contribution of ~10% to GDP



In addition, the NTS identifies key tourism segments to prioritise:



Sun & Sea, Culture and Adventure:
53% of global leisure spend



Luxury segment:
1% of global visits but drives 45% of global spend



Key markets:
Nine countries, including the USA and China,
expected to drive 50% of global tourism spend by 2030

Institutional Framework

Saudi Arabia has developed an integrated institutional ecosystem to support the implementation of its tourism strategy and ensure an investor-friendly environment. This framework combines policy-making, regulation, promotion, funding, and interagency coordination to facilitate growth across all tourism segments. The following entities play a critical role in shaping and delivering the Kingdom's tourism ambitions:



Ministry of Tourism

- Developing Tourism National Strategy and monitor sector performance
- Lays down legislation, rules, and regulations for the development of the tourism sector
- Attracts quality investments
- Develops and supports human capital
- Issues licenses and classifications for tourism activities and projects
- Provides an attractive investment environment
- Creates new job opportunities within the tourism sector



Tourism Development Fund (TDF)

- Provides targeted financing solutions for priority tourism projects
- Partners with banks and private investors to derisk private capital
- Offers direct loans and co-financing arrangements with local banks
- Engages in equity investments in tourism ventures
- Extends loan guarantees and risk-sharing mechanisms
- Designs special financial packages for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Supports projects in underdeveloped or high-potential destinations, aligned with the National Tourism Strategy
- Aligns its funding priorities with the National Tourism Strategy and Vision 2030
- Supporting Entrepreneurs through TDF Grow, and Advisory Services for Investors



Saudi Tourism Authority (STA)

- Promotes the Kingdom as a global and local tourist destination
- Develops tourism packages and products
- Participates in local and international exhibitions and trade events
- Monitors emerging tourism trends and suggests product and service improvements
- Oversees national and international marketing and promotional campaigns



Air Connectivity Program (ACP)

- Supports the launch of new domestic and international air routes
- Enhances flight frequency and capacity to priority destinations
- Offers route development incentives and partnerships with airlines
- Collaborates on airport infrastructure improvements
- Strengthens aviation competitiveness to meet tourism demand

Al Wahbah Crater,
recognized among the world's top 100 geological sites, Hail





4.5 Supportive Financial Sector & Enabling Investment Ecosystem

Saudi Arabia offers the largest capital market in the MENA region. Backed by strong sovereign institutions, abundant liquidity, and a national strategy to diversify the economy, the Kingdom has created one of the region's most supportive environments for tourism investment. Dedicated financial vehicles such as the **Tourism Development Fund (TDF)** and the **Public Investment Fund (PIF)** channel public capital into tourism assets of all scales, while platforms like **Invest Saudi** streamline investor access, approvals and aftercare. Together, these mechanisms reduce risk, expand access to finance, and accelerate the delivery of bankable tourism projects.












Tourism Development Fund (TDF)

Established by Royal Decree in June 2020, the **Tourism Development Fund (TDF)** plays a central role in unlocking the tourism sector's full potential in line with **Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030**. With an initial capital of **SAR 15 billion (USD 4 billion)**, TDF was created to empower one of the Kingdom's fastest-growing industries by enabling private sector participation and investment.

TDF's mission is to become the **financial catalyst for tourism sector development**, contributing to Saudi Arabia's **economic, social, and environmental prosperity**. It supports both large-scale investments and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), providing a suite of financial and non-financial solutions tailored to investor needs.

The Tourism Development Fund provides three main financial instruments—**debt, equity, and guarantees**—targeted at high-impact tourism investments requiring over **SAR 15 million (USD 4 million)** in funding. These solutions aim to stimulate large-scale infrastructure and experience-based tourism developments across priority destinations. Through these mechanisms, TDF supports both local and international investors seeking to enter or expand within the Saudi market, contributing to the achievement of Vision 2030 objectives.

Table 4.2 TDF's Core Financial Products

Instrument	Description	Finance Amount	Target Audience	Service Availability	Language
Debt Financing 	Short-, medium-, and long-term loans for infrastructure and service development across the tourism value chain.	> SAR 15,000,000 (USD 4,000,000)	Investors and large firms	24/7	Arabic, English  
Equity 	Cash equity injections into tourism-related projects using various investment vehicles.	> SAR 15,000,000 (USD 4,000,000)	Investors	24/7	Arabic, English  
Guarantees 	Letters of guarantee issued in partnership with banks to support investors' access to finance.	> SAR 15,000,000 (USD 4,000,000)	Investors	24/7	Arabic, English  

Source: Tourism Development Fund (TDF), available online at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025]

These products are channelled through the **Tourism Investment Portal** and prioritise **qualitative projects** across tourism destinations. Complementing its large-scale investment tools, TDF operates a comprehensive suite of **Four Tourism Empowerment Programmes**, tailored to the needs of **micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises** (MSMEs). These programmes offer financing amounts ranging from **SAR 10,000** (USD 2,667) to **SAR 15 million** (USD 4 million), and are delivered in partnership with banks, fintech platforms, and non-bank financial institutions. They are designed to enhance financial inclusion in the sector and foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation at the local level. Together, they reflect TDF's commitment to building a diversified tourism ecosystem where smaller actors play a vital role in delivering high-quality, authentic visitor experiences.



NBFI Program

Developed with licensed non-bank financial institutions (regulated by SAMA), offering working capital and CAPEX loans. | **Up to SAR 15,000,000** (USD 4,000,000) | MSMEs | Co-financing via alternative lenders | 24/7 | Arabic, English |



Kafalah Program

A loan guarantee programme that reduces risk for financial institutions lending to MSMEs. | **Up to SAR 15,000,000** (USD 4,000,000) | MSMEs | Credit guarantees issued via partner banks | 24/7 | Arabic, English |



Bank Program

Partnership between TDF and **Arab National Bank** offering shared-risk financing across the tourism sector. | **Up to SAR 5,000,000** (USD 1,333,000) | MSMEs | Competitive terms and reduced risk exposure | 24/7 | Arabic, English |



Fintech Platforms Program

Provides funding through fintech platforms acting as intermediaries, delivering tailored microfinancing. | **SAR 10,000 – 2,000,000** (USD 2,667 – 533,000) | Micro and small enterprises | Customised fintech-enabled access to capital | 24/7 | Arabic, English |

Source: Tourism Development Fund (TDF), available online at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].

Additionally, the **Tourism Investment Enabler Program (TIEP)**—launched in March 2024 by the **Ministry of Tourism**—complements the efforts of the Tourism Development Fund by improving the ease and cost-efficiency of investing in Saudi Arabia. A key component of the programme, the **Hospitality Investment Enablers**, aims to mobilise up to SAR 42 billion (USD 11 billion) in private investment across strategic tourism destinations.

Targets by 2030:

42.3 Billion
Investment Unlock

120,000
jobs

42,000
hotel rooms

16.4 Billion
GDP Contribution

The initiative aims to support private sector investment in strategic destinations through a package of fiscal incentives, including exemption from leasing costs for government-owned land, which can reduce initial investment development costs by up to 25%. It is expected to support the creation of around **42,000 hotel rooms** and generate approximately **120,000 jobs**. In a further effort to enhance competitiveness, Saudi Arabia announced in September 2024 the **elimination of municipality licensing fees** for all types of accommodation.

TDF's integrated approach—combining **capital mobilisation**, **strategic partnerships**, and **regulatory alignment**—is pivotal in achieving the Kingdom's National Tourism Strategy objectives. It facilitates inclusive access to capital, encourages geographic diversification of tourism offerings, and enhances the bankability of tourism enterprises across all scales.

Together, these instruments ensure that Saudi Arabia is not only building world-class destinations but doing so with **broad-based investment participation**, enabling a sustainable and diversified tourism economy.







Public Investment Fund (PIF)

The **Public Investment Fund (PIF)** is Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund and a key pillar of the country's economic transformation under **Vision 2030**. As the main investment arm of the government, PIF plays a dual role: generating long-term financial returns while supporting strategic national development objectives, including the diversification of the Kingdom's economy and the stimulation of the private sector.

With assets under management exceeding **SAR 3.5 trillion (USD 925 billion)**, PIF has built a diversified and high-quality portfolio spanning domestic, regional, and global markets. The fund operates across **six strategic investment pools**—four local and two international—designed to maximise economic impact, promote sectoral development, and position Saudi Arabia competitively on the global stage.

Sources of Funding and Financial Independence

PIF's investment activity is underpinned by four main sources of funding:



Capital injections
from the government



Transfer of
government assets



Loans and
debt instruments

Retained earnings from its own investments

As an independent entity, PIF reinvests its capital to achieve long-term growth and public benefit, rather than relying on state budgetary allocations. Its financial autonomy and reinvestment mandate allow the fund to plan and execute complex, long-horizon projects with consistency and transparency. Domestically, PIF focuses on sectors that are aligned with Vision 2030 and critical to national development. These include:

- Real estate and urban development
- Transportation and logistics
- Renewable energy and utilities
- Entertainment, culture and sports
- Industrial manufacturing and technology
- Financial services
- Tourism and hospitality

King Abdullah Financial District, KAFD, Riyadh



Through targeted investment in these sectors, PIF seeks to create jobs, attract foreign investment, and develop domestic capabilities that enhance the Kingdom's economic resilience.

Tourism as a Priority Investment Sector

Tourism is one of PIF's key focus areas, identified for its potential to create employment, foster entrepreneurship, and showcase the Kingdom's cultural and natural assets to the world. As a sovereign investor, PIF plays a catalytic role in developing the tourism ecosystem by funding large-scale, iconic projects that serve as anchor destinations and stimulate broader private sector activity.

Among its tourism-focused initiatives are the giga-projects under Vision 2030, including **NEOM**, **Red Sea Global**, **Diriyah Gate**, **Qiddiya**, and **AMAALA**. These projects combine urban development, heritage preservation, luxury tourism, and sustainability, aiming to position Saudi Arabia as a global tourism destination across multiple segments—from culture and wellness to nature and adventure.

While PIF leads the development and financing of these flagship projects, its strategic objective is also to unlock private sector investment by creating an enabling environment and demonstrating project viability. In doing so, it helps mitigate first-mover risks and establishes benchmarks for quality and innovation within the tourism sector. Reflecting this strong commitment, **Saudi Arabia received the highest possible score (7.0) in the Travel & Tourism Capital Investment Intensity indicator of the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index**, highlighting the scale and focus of national investment efforts in the sector.



Empty Quarter Desert

5

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Across Saudi Arabia, there is significant potential to attract investments across six key tourism supply categories: Accommodation, Tourism Asset Development, Retail, F&B, Events and Tourism Activities. These opportunities align with the unique value propositions of each destination and respond to both current demand patterns and future growth projections.





مسجد ليل
Layla Mosque
مسجد ليل
Layla Mosque
مسجد ليل
Layla Mosque

1 ACCOMMODATION AND RELEVANT ASSET DEVELOPMENT

In **Accommodations**, investment opportunities are concentrated in both midscale and luxury offerings. There is an opportunity for midscale (3-star) hotels in Makkah, Riyadh and Jeddah, alongside luxury (5-star) hotels in the Red Sea. Additional opportunities exist in Sun & Beach accommodation (alongside coastal regions) in the Red Sea, Jeddah and Al Khobar, as well as City Break accommodation (in urban areas) in Riyadh, Makkah and Jeddah.



Luxury

5-star+ luxury hotels, resorts, hotel villas, and apartment hotels



Upper Upscale

5-star hotels, resorts, hotel villas, apartment hotels and camping hotels; heritage hotels



Upscale

4-star hotels, resorts, hotel villas, apartment hotels and camping hotels



Midscale

3-star hotels, resorts, camping, apartment hotels and camping hotels; first-class chalets, deluxe serviced apartments, and pop-up accommodation



Budget

2-star and 1-star hotels and apartment hotels; standard serviced apartments, economy chalet, hostels



Marine visitor center

In **Relevant Asset Development**, multiple sub-purposes present attractive opportunities. City break attractions such as theme parks and malls are particularly relevant in Riyadh and Jeddah. Sun & Beach attractions, including beach clubs and marinas, present opportunities in Madinah Region (Yanbu), while Nature and Adventure attractions such as national parks, zoos and reserves are in demand across the Eastern Province.



SUN & BEACH

Developed assets located along coastlines or waterfronts.

Beaches, Islands, Waterfronts, Marinas, Docks, Beach Clubs



CULTURE & HERITAGE

Developed assets located along coastlines or waterfronts.

Museums, Rock Arts, Old Souqs, Historical Buildings, Historic Towns & Villages, Archaeological Sites, Cultural art Galleries



NATURE & ADVENTURE

Natural environments adapted for outdoor recreation and exploration

Waterfalls, Oases, Mountains, National Parks, Farms and Zoos, Nature Reserves, Zipline Facilities, Nature Observation Lookouts



CITY BREAK

Urban-based structures designed for leisure and entertainment

Theme Parks, Malls, Urban Parks, Theatre & Performance Venues, Aquariums, Indoor Entertainment Zones, City Observation Lookouts, Family Entertainment Centers



NICHES

Dedicated physical assets for specialized leisure interests

Sport Stadiums, Sport Complexes, Golf Courses, Wedding/Celebration Venues, Motorsport Tracks



2 RETAIL

Priority opportunities include luxury retail outlets and heritage markets and souvenirs, particularly in Makkah and Madinah. These investments not only respond to the needs of high-spending visitors but also highlight cultural authenticity through heritage markets and souvenir offerings.



LUXURY RETAIL

High-end products in fashion & accessories, jewelry & watches, and beauty, covering 170+ brands



LIFESTYLE & ESSENTIAL RETAIL

Retail stores offering accessible fashion, personal care, electronics, and everyday essentials



DUTY FREE

Duty-free, travel-focused retail stores located in airports, seaports and land-borders, catering primarily to international travelers



HERITAGE MARKETS & SOUVENIRS

Traditional markets and stores offering culturally inspired goods, locally made crafts, and Saudi-themed souvenirs



3 FOOD AND BEVERAGE (F&B)

There is clear investment potential in quick service restaurants and casual dining restaurants in Makkah and Madinah. This reflects both the high volume of religious tourists and the evolving demand for accessible, high-quality dining options.



FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS – FINE DINING

Provision of high-quality food preparation and beverage services with formal seating, professional waiter service, and often entertainment



FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS – CASUAL DINING

Provision of F&B services with seating and waiter service in a more relaxed and informal setting, without the premium service standards



QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS

Provision of meals in self-service establishments that offer seating but no waiter service or meals without seating or waiter service



BEVERAGE SERVICES

Provision of beverages only, with or without entertainment such as juice bars



4 YEAR-ROUND EVENTS

Investment opportunities are concentrated in leisure events, with particularly strong potential in Madinah and Jeddah. These events can diversify the tourism experience and extend visitor stays while stimulating local economic activity.



LEISURE

Diverse mix of experiences designed to engage a wide range of audiences through curated activities, festivals, and immersive offerings

Beach festivals (e.g., live music), Sports tournaments (e.g., volleyball, surfing), Shoreline music concerts, Traditional music and dance festivals (e.g., Saudi Ardah), Traditional crafts and local dress exhibitions, Stargazing events and desert astronomy festivals, Film screenings and nature photography expos, City-wide performances, Art exhibitions and painting events, Wellness retreats with curated agendas, Wedding fairs and luxury bridal showcases, Ticketed regatta viewing events, Beach art exhibitions (e.g., sand sculpture), Firework shows, Theatrical folk-themed festivals and storytelling, Cultural village activations and historical reenactments, Hiking marathons and eco-themed nature festivals, Skydiving exhibitions and aerial sports demos, Ticketed urban festivals, Cruise-themed activations, Comic-cons, anime and gaming conventions, Animal-focused family activations.



BUSINESS

Professional events within formal or mixed-use business environments

Corporate summits and leadership forums, Industry-specific conferences (e.g., oil & gas, tech, tourism), Investor roadshows and startup pitching events, Trade exhibitions and B2B expos, Product or brand launch events (with entertainment), Award galas and corporate recognition nights, Networking receptions and business dinners with entertainment.



OTHERS

Other tourism events that do not fall under the defined categories (e.g., medical tourism expos)

Medical tourism expos, Educational fairs with cultural entertainment components, UN conferences and youth forums, Cultural exchange programs with showcases.



5 TOURISM ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES

This sub-sector offers several high-value opportunities. In Madinah, there is potential for Sun & Beach activities such as boat trips and scuba diving. In Makkah and Madinah, religious activities—including guided mosque visits and pilgrimage tours—represent strong investment areas. Riyadh, meanwhile, offers opportunities in City Break activities such as guided tours of cultural landmarks.



SUN & BEACH

Organized excursions and leisure-based activities in coastal/lake environments

Boat trips and tours, Snorkeling/diving/surfing, Parasailing, Island-hopping experiences, Beachside wellness sessions, Guided beach horseback riding, Kayaking/Rowing, Fishing.



CULTURE & HERITAGE

Guided experiences immersing visitors in cultural heritage and local traditions

Historical walking tours, Site-based heritage explorations, Archaeological site visits, Traditional crafts workshops, Culinary heritage classes, Folklore storytelling sessions, Language or calligraphy workshops, Traditional food tasting tours.



NATURE & ADVENTURE

Outdoor and adventure-driven programs in natural settings

Desert safari tours, Guided hikes, Trekking expeditions, Mountain exploration tours (hiking/biking), Wellness trails, Eco-tourism journeys, Stargazing excursions, Dune-exploration experiences.



CITY BREAK

Structured tours and immersive experiences within urban environments

City sightseeing tours (hop on hop off), Guided visits to landmarks, Street food tours, Themed neighborhood experiences, Art gallery tours, Observatory tours, Urban photography, Architectural walking tours.



NICHES

Interest-based activities addressing specific leisure (e.g., sports, yachting & sailing, cruises)

Sports fan zone tours, Stadium walkthroughs, Wedding photography experiences, Yacht and cruise excursion packages, Sailing packages.



RELIGIOUS

Tours and visits related to religious practices (e.g., pilgrimage tours, guided visits to mosques)

Pilgrimage tours, Guided mosque visits, Religious landmarks tours, Islamic history tours, Ziyarat programs, Islamic heritage experiences, Quran recitation sessions, Islam storytelling workshops



OTHERS

Medical and educational tours and activities under other travel purposes/sub-purposes

Medical tourism package tours, University tours



Riyadh

6

HOW TO INVEST IN SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia has introduced wide-ranging reforms to streamline business setup procedures and attract both domestic and international investors. The investment journey is organised into well-defined stages, each supported by specialised government entities and integrated digital platforms.

Before entering the formal registration and licensing stages, investors must complete a set of preparatory steps to ensure a smooth setup process. These are supported by the **Ministry of Investment (MISA)** and form the basis for the company's legal and operational presence in the Kingdom.





Stage 1

ISSUANCE OF INVESTMENT LICENSE

Only for foreign investors

Requirements

- o Audited financials
- o Home Commercial Registration stamped by the KSA Embassy

Requirements Provider

- o Ministry of Investment



Stage 2

ISSUANCE OF COMMERCIAL REGISTERS

Requirements

- o Commercial register of the parent company
- o Board resolution for opening a branch (for foreign company branches)
- o Memorandum of Association (for new companies)
- o Appointment of the general director
- o ID proof of owners and general director

Requirements Provider

- o Ministry of Commerce



Stage 3

OTHER REGISTERS

Requirements

- o Registration with:
 - Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD)
 - General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI)
 - Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority (ZATCA) Saudi Post
 - Chamber of Commerce (CoC)

Requirements Provider

- o MHRSD
- o GOSI
- o ZATCA
- o Saudi Post
- o CoC



Stage 4

PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES

Requirements

- o Land/Construction/Office Permit
- o Occupancy Certificate
- o Safety Certificate
- o Commercial Activity License
- o Shomoos Registration (for accommodation)

Requirements Provider

- o Ministry of Municipalities and Housing
- o Civil Defence
- o Ministry of Interior



Stage 5

OPERATION LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE

Requirements

- o Operating License
- o Classification Certificate

Requirements Provider

- o Ministry of Tourism

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT:**

MINISTRY OF TOURISM
www.mt.gov.sa

TOURISM INVESTMENT
www.mt.gov.sa/investment-and-attraction/overview

invest@mt.gov.sa





Elephant Rock, Al-Ula



CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia today stands as one of the most ambitious and forward-looking tourism investment destinations worldwide. Guided by Vision 2030, the Kingdom has positioned tourism as a central driver of economic diversification and long-term growth. The sector has already demonstrated remarkable progress: visitor numbers are climbing at a pace unmatched across the region, receipts are growing steadily, and tourism's contribution to the economy has more than doubled in just a few years. This performance is not coincidental. It is the result of a comprehensive reform agenda that has simplified regulation, opened new avenues for international participation, and built a financial ecosystem that gives investors the confidence to plan for the future.

The opportunity extends far beyond numbers. Saudi Arabia's geography and cultural wealth form an extraordinary foundation for sustainable development. From its 3,000 kilometres of coastline and unique desert landscapes to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites and countless intangible heritage elements, the Kingdom offers a tourism offering of remarkable diversity and depth. At the same time, giga-projects and world-class cultural and sportive events are re-defining tourism, combining design, sustainability, and innovation to create entirely new experiences. These flagship initiatives are complemented by a growing portfolio of opportunities in hospitality, experiences, heritage, and integrated tourism complexes, supported by government incentives and partnerships designed to ensure long-term success.

All of these elements converge in a single message: Saudi Arabia is not only open for tourism investment, it is actively shaping one of the most dynamic and secure markets in the world. The pace of reform, the scale of opportunity, and the clarity of vision provide a rare alignment of conditions for investors seeking growth, diversification, and long-term impact. With measurable results already visible and bold targets ahead, the Kingdom offers a compelling proposition: to participate in building a tourism economy that is sustainable, globally competitive, and central to the future of one of the world's most transformative national strategies.

REFERENCES

- 1 **General Authority for Statistics GASTAT (2025)** *Labour market statistics, Q1 2025*. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=417515> [25.07.2025].
- 2 Ministry of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- 3 International Monetary Fund (2025), *World Economic Outlook Update, April 2025 Edition*, FMI, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [20-05-2025].
- 4 International Monetary Fund (2025), *World Economic Outlook Update, January 2025 Edition*, FMI, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [20-02-2025].
- 5 International Monetary Fund (2025), *World Economic Outlook Update, April 2025 Edition*, FMI, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [20-05-2025].
- 6 International Monetary Fund (2025), *World Economic Outlook Update, April 2025 Edition*, FMI, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [20-05-2025].
- 7 International Monetary Fund (2025), *World Economic Outlook Update, July 2025 Edition*, FMI, Washington, D.C., available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [20-05-2025].
- 8 Ministry of Finance (2024) *Budget Statement 2025*. Riyadh: Ministry of Finance, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Available online: <https://www.mof.gov.sa/en/budget/2025> [26.09.2025].
- 9 International Monetary Fund (2025) *World Economic Outlook, April 2025*. Washington, D.C.: IMF. Available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [26.05.2025].
- 10 OECD (2025) *OECD Economic Outlook, March 2025*. Paris. Available online: <https://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook> [26.05.2025].
- 11 World Bank (2025) *Middle East and North Africa Economic Update, April 2025*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena> [26.05.2025].
- 12 Standard & Poor's (2025) *Saudi Arabia Ratings Report – March 2025*. New York: S&P Global Ratings. Available online: <https://www.spglobal.com/ratings> [26.05.2025].
- 13 Fitch Ratings (2025) *Fitch Affirms Saudi Arabia at 'A+'; Outlook Stable – February 2025*. London: Fitch Ratings. Available online: <https://www.fitchratings.com> [26.05.2025].
- 14 **General Authority for Statistics (2025)** *Labour market statistics, Q1 2025*. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=417515> [25.07.2025].

- 15 **General Authority for Statistics (2025)** *Labour market statistics, Q1 2025*. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=417515> [25.07.2025].
- 16 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 17 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 18 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 19 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 20 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 21 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 22 International Monetary Fund (2025) *World Economic Outlook, April 2025*. Washington, D.C.: IMF. Available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [26.05.2025].
- 23 International Monetary Fund (2025) *World Economic Outlook, April 2025*. Washington, D.C.: IMF. Available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [26.05.2025].
- 24 OECD (2025) *FDI in Figures – April 2025*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Available online: <https://www.oecd.org/investment/statistics> [26.05.2025].
- 25 UNCTAD (2025) *World Investment Trends Monitor – January 2025*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Available online: <https://unctad.org/publication/world-investment-report> [26.05.2025].
- 26 International Monetary Fund (2025) *World Economic Outlook, April 2025*. Washington, D.C.: IMF. Available online: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO> [26.05.2025].
- 27 Ministry of Investment (2025) *Economic and Investment Monitor, Saudi Arabia*. Riyadh: Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Available online: <https://www.investsaudi.sa/en/reports-publications> [26.05.2025].
- 28 Ministry of Investment (2025) *Economic and Investment Monitor, Saudi Arabia*. Riyadh: Ministry of Investment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Available online: <https://www.investsaudi.sa/en/reports-publications> [26.05.2025].
- 29 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 30 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 31 General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) (2025), available online at: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 32 fDi Markets (2025) *Greenfield Investment Data – Tourism Sector in the Middle East (2019–2024)*. Financial Times Ltd. Available online: <https://www.fdimarkets.com> [26.05.2025].

- 33 fDi Markets (2025) *Greenfield Investment Data – Tourism Sector in the Middle East (2019–2024)*. Financial Times Ltd. Available online: <https://www.fdimarkets.com> [26.05.2025].
- 34 fDi Markets (2025) *Greenfield Investment Data – Tourism Sector in the Middle East (2019–2024)*. Financial Times Ltd. Available online: <https://www.fdimarkets.com> [26.05.2025].
- 35 fDi Markets (2025) *Greenfield Investment Data – Tourism Sector in the Middle East (2019–2024)*. Financial Times Ltd. Available online: <https://www.fdimarkets.com> [26.05.2025].
- 36 PIF (2023) *PIF Strategy and Sectoral Investment Breakdown*. Public Investment Fund. Available online: <https://www.pif.gov.sa/en/Pages/Strategy.aspx> [26.05.2025].
- 37 Red Sea Global (2023) *Annual Sustainability Report 2023*. Available online: <https://www.redseaglobal.com/en> [26.05.2025].
- 38 PIF (2023) *PIF Launches Asfar to Unlock Saudi Arabia's Tourism Potential*. Public Investment Fund. Available online: <https://www.pif.gov.sa> [26.05.2025].
- 39 TDF (2024) *Tourism Development Fund – Annual Performance Update*. Available online: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa> [26.05.2025].
- 40 NDMC (2024) *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Green Financing Framework*. National Debt Management Center. Available at: https://www.ndmc.gov.sa/en/investorsrelations/Pages/Green_Framework.aspx [27.05.2025].
- 41 PIF (2024) *Green Bond Impact Assessment Report*. Public Investment Fund. Available at: <https://www.pif.gov.sa/-/media/project/pif-corporate/pif-corporate-site/our-financials/capital-markets-program/pdf/pif-green-bond-impact-assessment-2024.pdf> [27.05.2025].
- 42 TDF (2025) *Tourism Development Fund Overview*. Tourism Development Fund. Available at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/en/> [27.05.2025].
- 43 Red Sea Global (2021) *RSG secures SAR 14.12 billion loan and first-ever Riyal-denominated green finance credit facility*. Available at: <https://www.redseaglobal.com/en/w/media-center/rsg-secures-sar-14-billion-loan-and-first-ever-green-finance-credit-facility/> [27.05.2025].
- 44 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- 45 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- 46 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- 47 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.

- 48 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- 49 World Tourism Organization (2025), *World Tourism Barometer*, volume 23, issue 2, May 2025, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- 50 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 51 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 52 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 53 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 54 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 55 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 56 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 57 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 58 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 59 Ministry of Tourism (2025), *Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia, Annual Statistical Report 2024*, Available Online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/tic/publications> [15.09.2025].
- 60 <https://mt.gov.sa/investment-and-attraction/tourism-strategy/nts>.
- 61 UNESCO (2024) *The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area*. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1712> [28.05.2025].
- 62 UNESCO (2023) *'Uruq Bani Ma'arid*. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1699> [28.05.2025].
- 63 UNESCO (2021) *Ĥimā Cultural Area*. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1619> [28.05.2025].

- 64 UNESCO (2018) Al-Ahsa Oasis, an Evolving Cultural Landscape. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1563> [28.05.2025].
- 65 UNESCO (n.d.) Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1472> [28.05.2025].
- 66 UNESCO (n.d.) Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1361> [28.05.2025].
- 67 UNESCO (n.d.) At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah. Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1329> [28.05.2025].
- 68 UNESCO (n.d.) Al-Hijr Archaeological Site (Madā'in Šālīḥ). Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1293> [28.05.2025].
- 69 UNESCO (n.d.) Al-Qatt Al-Asiri. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 70 UNESCO (n.d.) Almezmar. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 71 UNESCO (n.d.) Alardah Alnajdiyyah. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 72 UNESCO (n.d.) Majlis. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 73 UNESCO (n.d.) Traditional weaving of Al Sadu. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 74 UNESCO (n.d.) Arabic calligraphy. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 75 UNESCO (n.d.) Falconry. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 76 UNESCO (n.d.) Alheda'a. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 77 UNESCO (n.d.) Khawlani coffee. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 78 UNESCO (n.d.) Date palm. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 79 UNESCO (n.d.) Metal engraving. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 80 UNESCO (n.d.) Harees. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 81 UNESCO (n.d.) Arabic coffee. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 82 UNESCO (n.d.) Semsemiah. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 83 UNESCO (n.d.) Henna. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 84 UNESCO (n.d.) Taif roses. Available online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [28.05.2025].
- 85 UNESCO (n.d.) Juzur Farasan. Available online: <https://www.unesco.org/en/mab/juzur-farasan> [28.05.2025].
- 86 UNESCO (n.d.) Harrat Uwayrid. Available online: <https://www.unesco.org/en/mab/harrat-uwayrid> [28.05.2025].
- 87 UN Tourism (n.d.) Best Tourism Villages 2022 – AlUla Old Town. Available online: <https://tourism-villages.unwto.org/> [28.05.2025].
- 88 UN Tourism (n.d.) Best Tourism Villages 2021 – Rijal Alma'a. Available online: <https://tourism-villages.unwto.org/> [28.05.2025].

- 89 UN Tourism (n.d.) Best Tourism Villages 2024 – Abo Noghta Castles & Historic Tabab. Available online: <https://tourism-villages.unwto.org/> [28.05.2025].
- 90 Invest Saudi (2025), available online at: <https://www.investinsaudis.com/> [20.04.2025].
- 91 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 92 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 93 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 94 King Fahd International Airport (2025), Expansion and Development Plans. Available online: <https://dmairport.com/expansion-and-size/> [25.07.2025].
- 95 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 96 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 97 GASTAT (2024). *Air Transport Statistics Publication 2024*. General Authority for Statistics. Available online: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/statistics-tabs?tab=436312&category=124954> [30.05.2025].
- 98 Saudi Arabia Air Connectivity Programme (2025), available online at: <https://www.acp.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 99 Saudi Press Agency (2023) “72,000 km of Roads, 13 Ports Link Saudi Arabia to the World”, available online at: <https://www.spa.gov.sa/en/0a4a6e7e48d> [20.05.2025].
- 100 MAWANI (2025), Saudi Ports Authority. Available online at: <https://mawani.gov.sa/about-us> [20.05.2025].
- 101 Ministry of Tourism (n/d), National Tourism Strategy, Available online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/about/national-tourism-strategy> [20.04.2025].
- 102 Ministry of Tourism (n/d), National Tourism Strategy, Available online at: <https://mt.gov.sa/about/national-tourism-strategy> [20.04.2025].
- 103 Tourism Development Fund (TDF), available online at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 104 Tourism Development Fund (TDF), available online at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 105 Tourism Development Fund (TDF), available online at: <https://www.tdf.gov.sa/> [20.05.2025].
- 106 Public Investment Fund (PIF), Available online at: <https://www.pif.gov.sa/> [20.04.2025].

Disclaimer from the Ministry of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

The Saudi Ministry of Tourism (MT) does not guarantee the quality, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of the data presented; MT does not provide any explicit or implied guarantees or direct affirmations of any kind, on the credibility, quality, accuracy, aptness, timeliness, readiness or completeness of the data presented in this report or any relative materials. MT is not responsible in any way towards any party as a result of any decision or action taken or will be taken by that party based on the content of these pages. MT takes no responsibility, either in whole or in part, for any direct or indirect, incidental, consequential, or punitive damage, whether special or general. MT also is not responsible for any lost opportunity, loss or damage of any kind arising from these pages. Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or use of this report in whole or part of it may lead to legal consequences.

UN Tourism, a specialized agency of the United Nations, is the leading international organization with a central and decisive role in the promotion and development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It provides a global forum for tourism policy issues and a useful source of tourism expertise. It is composed of 160 countries, 6 Associate Members, 2 permanent observers and more than 500 Affiliate Members.



UN Tourism

TOURISM DOING BUSINESS

INVESTING IN

SAUDI ARABIA