

ifa ECP Monitor Fact Sheet

Saudi Arabia

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1. Key Indicators

		2019	% change since 2015
Population	Number/rank	34.3 million / 41 st	31.7 million / 8%
GDP	Rank/number	18 th / €1.5 trillion	23 rd / €1.39 trillion / 8%
GDP per capita	Number/rank	€43,877.11 / 41 st	€44,636.29 / -1.7%
Cultural economy	As share of GDP	-	-
Education economy	As share of GDP	7.8% (2015)	-
R&D economy	As share of GDP	0.815% (2013)	-
Media economy	As share of GDP	-	-

Sources: World Bank, 2019; OECD, 2020; The World Bank, 2013

Geopolitical position	Hard power rank	17 th (2021)	-	↑
	World trade ranking	23 rd	23 rd	-
	Soft power rank	-	-	-
	Diplomacy rank	30 th	28 th (2016)	↓

Sources: Global Firepower, 2021; Lowy Institute, 2020; Portland, 2019

2. Government funding as percent of total government outlays, by selected fields

	2019	2015
Culture	-	-
Education	18.9%	-
R & D ¹	-	-
Media	-	-

Source: KPMG, 2020

¹ Expressed as GBARD - Government budget appropriations or outlays on R&D.

3. Overview of External Cultural Policy

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	34
Total number of institutions abroad	31
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	-
Government financial support (€ million)	> 3,500
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€ million)	> 3,500
Comparative ECP rank	medium

MAIN ECP OBJECTIVES

- “To raise the country’s human resources and competences to a level where they can effectively compete at the world level and therefore serve as an important resource for Saudi universities and the public and private sectors.” (Saudi Arabian National Portal, n.d.).
 - Sending abroad Saudi students to excellent research institutions in the world with the “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques’ Overseas Scholarship Program”.
 - Invest in scholarship and training opportunities abroad for Saudi researchers, for instance from the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology.
- To create opportunities for Saudi artists and curators to benefit from global cultural exchange.
 - Cultural Scholarships at the Ministry of Culture.
 - Arts grants and Riyadh Residencies for international and domestic cultural workers.
 - Cultural missions abroad.
- To expand and diversify tourism in Saudi Arabia.
 - Double the number of UNESCO heritage sites by 2030.
 - Invest in Saudi cultural museums to make them internationally competitive.

Sources: Saudi Arabian National Portal, n.d.; King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, 2019; Pavan, 2020; Ministry of Culture, 2019, 2020; Misk Art Institute, 2021a, 2021b.

POLICY CONTEXT

- Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy that has until recently directed its policies at closure from other cultures. The new monarch King Salman bin Abdulaziz and his Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman have introduced the Vision 2030 in 2016, which dictates reforms for nearly all areas of governance.
- Many of the policies in Saudi ECP correspondingly aim at attracting foreign talent and investment to diversify the domestic economy and thereby reduce the country’s dependency on oil exports.

Sources: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016; Somers Cocks, 2017; Alkatheeri & Khan, 2019.

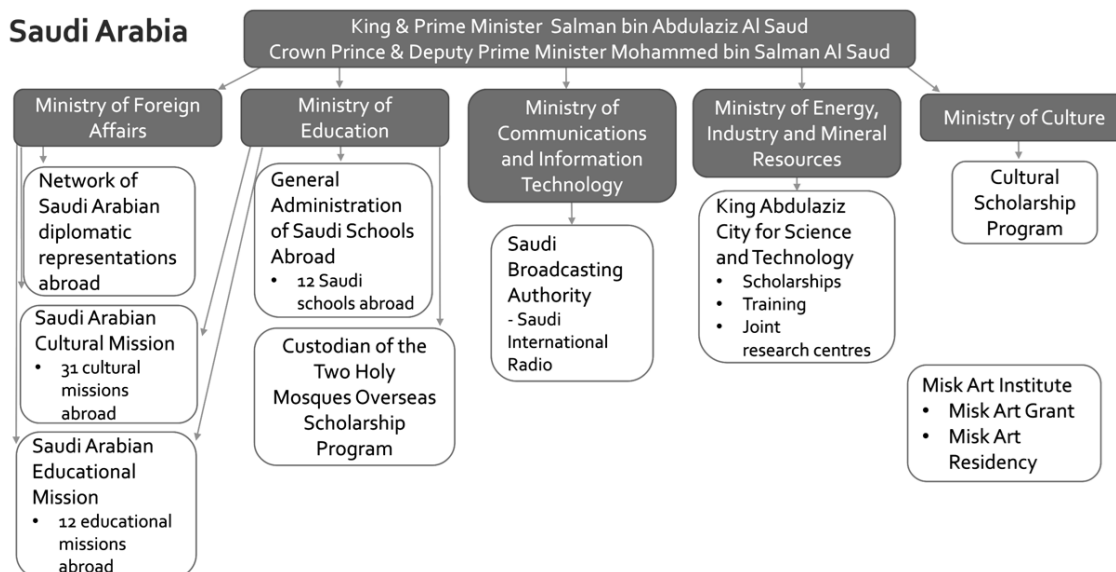
REGIONAL FOCUS AND INSTITUTIONAL EMPHASIS

- There are two regional emphases of Saudi policies:
 - the Muslim and Arab world, which are tied to Saudi Arabia due to the location of the two holy mosques in Mecca and in Medina and often share the Arabic language with Saudi Arabia.
 - trade and education partners in “Western” countries, most importantly the United States.

- Education is the primary tool of Saudi ECP. Therefore, academic scholarship programs and foreign training schemes, in addition to Saudi schools and teachers abroad, form the majority of Saudi Arabia's programming abroad.

Sources: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016; Alkatheeri & Khan, 2019; Pavan, 2020; King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, 2019

Institutional Map



4. Fields of External Cultural Policy

	2019	2015
Culture and the Arts		
Number of countries present	31	-
Number of institutes	Cultural Missions ² : 31	-
Number of FTE staff	-	-
Number of artists in exchange programs	3 ³	-
Number of cultural agreements	-	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-

² The mandate of these missions is often divided between cultural and educational/advisory tasks.

³ This numbers refers to the artists supported to travel to the Bienalsur, rather than artists participating in an exchange program.

	2019	2015
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

Sources: Ministry of Education, n.d.-a; Ministry of Culture, 2019

Language		
Number of countries where courses are offered	> 11	-
Number of students enrolled	In class: - Online reach: -	In class: - Online reach: -
Number of candidates for Arabic language qualifications	ALPT (Arabic Language Proficiency Test): ?	-
Number of language teachers	297 ⁴	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

Source: Ministry of Education, 2017

Education - Primary & Secondary		
Number of countries	12	-
Number of schools	12	20
Number of students	4558	-
Number of staff / teachers	-	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

Sources: Ministry of Education, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d

Education - Tertiary		
Number of countries	~51	-
Number of universities / colleges abroad	0	-
Number of domestic universities / colleges	43	-
Number of foreign students	Inbound: 73,216 Outbound: 77,406	Inbound: 73,077

⁴ This refers to the number of teachers sent abroad through the Saudi Educational Missions Abroad.

	2019	2015
Number of students at trans-national higher education (TNE)	0 ⁵	0
Number of government scholarships awarded	More than 196,221 to date (since 2015).	-
Number of staff / teachers	-	-
Budget (€ million)	> €3.5 billion (2018) ⁶	-
Government financial support	€3.5 billion (2018)	-

Sources: Allahmorad & Zreik, 2020; UNESCO, n.d.; Ministry of Finance, 2018

Science and Research		
Number of countries	King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KASCT) ⁷ : 12	-
Number of institutes	- ⁸	-
Number of researchers / staff	> 157 ⁹	-
Number of projects	> 14	-
Number scientists in exchange programs	KASCT Scholarships: 239 KASCT Training: 1245	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

Source: King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, 2019

Media		
TV: Al Arabiya		
Number of countries broadcasted to	- ¹⁰	-
Number of languages	Website reporting: 4	-
Number of channels	1	1
Audience / weekly (million)	36 million	-

⁵ Saudi Arabia has only permitted the opening of foreign branch campuses on Saudi Arabian soil and is now in the process of acquiring potential interested international parties. Saudi Arabia's universities do not have any branch campuses abroad.

⁶ This refers to the government allocation for the "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Overseas Scholarship Program".

⁷ All numbers pertaining to the KASCT are derived from the most recent annual report available, from 2018.

⁸ The KACST offers financial support to 14 joint research centres, all of which are in the United States or in the United Kingdom.

⁹ This refers to the total number of employees listed by the KACST, not only those involved in international programming.

¹⁰ While we know that Al Arabiya targets a pan-Arab audience and function as a competitor to the Qatari media corporation Al Jazeera, no official counts of the countries catered to are available in English.

	2019	2015
Digital & social media audience (million)	Website: 20 million/month Social media: Twitter: 14.6 million (2021) Facebook: 26 million (2021) Instagram: 3.2 million (2021)	-
Budget (€ million)	-	-
Radio: Saudi International Radio		
Number of countries broadcasted to	62	-
Number of languages	10	-
Number of channels	-	-
Audience / weekly (million)	-	-
Digital & social media audience	-	-

Sources: Naar, 2020; Al Arabiya, n.d.; Al-Rajhi, 2020; Najjar, n.d.; Kosárová, 2020; Twitter; Facebook; Instagram

5. Current Issues and Developments

- In the framework of the Vision 2030, many new government-funded bodies and programs have been developed, several of which aim at the Saudi ECP. Among these are for instance the grant & residency programs by the Misk Art Institute, as well as the Cultural Scholarship Program implemented through the Ministry of Culture.
- Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman remains an internationally controversial figure, as he is accused of the mass arrests of high-ranking government officials in 2017 and of the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. Particularly in response to the latter, Saudi Arabia has received international criticism. Partnering research institutions in the United States, for instance, have come under pressure to justify the collaboration with Saudi Arabia.

6. Contributions to multilateral cultural organisations

	2019	2015
UNESCO	€1,565,069	-
IFACCA	€16,134	-

Source: UNESCO, 2019; IFACCA, 2019

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Imprint

The External Cultural Policy Monitor

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This paper is a summary of the respective Country Report.

Preferred citation

ifa ECP Team (11/2021). "Saudi Arabia. Factsheet," in: Helmut K. Anheier and ifa (eds.). The External Cultural Policy Monitor. Stuttgart: ifa.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ifa.

Publisher:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17901/ecp.2021.077>