

Saudi Arabia: Applications to and approvals of changes of profession by MoL's labour offices, by administrative region (2014)

	Applications to profession changes			Approved profession changes		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Riyadh	158,782	2,798	161,580	130,892	2,271	133,163
Makkah	147,930	3,330	151,260	122,331	2,839	125,170
Madinah	23,077	323	23,400	19,221	294	19,515
Al-Qasseem	13,199	212	13,411	11,085	174	11,259
Eastern	85,601	577	86,178	73,743	488	74,231
Assir	15,815	96	15,911	12,914	74	12,988
Hail	5,039	86	5,125	4,079	69	4,148
Tabouk	6,465	35	6,500	5,420	27	5,447
Al-Baha	2,168	11	2,179	1,827	4	1,831
Northern Border	2,002	8	2,010	1,604	8	1,612
Al-Jouf	3,797	15	3,812	3,173	8	3,181
Jazan	7,783	51	7,834	6,319	23	6,342
Najran	6,135	25	6,160	4,955	15	4,970
Total	477,793	7,567	485,360	397,563	6,294	403,857

Source: Ministry of Labour

1. Definition

To the exception of certain categories of investors, all foreign residents in Saudi Arabia are under the responsibility of a local "sponsor", usually the employer.

The sponsor receives the agreement to bring a foreign employee upon certification that he / she will employ the labourer in a specific profession. The "Iqama" (residency card) mentions the profession of the worker, which also conditions certain rights (family reunion for instance). The Saudi Labour Law has provisions allowing the worker to change profession/ sponsor. However, the procedure was conditioned to obtaining a Non-Objection Certificate from the first sponsor.

Since the onset of the Nitaqat ("ranges", "zones") campaign of Saudisation of the work force in September 2011, which classifies private sector companies by "range" based on the

Saudisation performance, changes of profession/ sponsor have been made easier for the workers in companies displaying the highest saudisation performance' categories ("Green" and "Premium" or "Excellent").

Those in companies with poorest rates of Saudisation (classified in "red" and "yellow" categories) cannot change profession.

2013' figure is notably higher than previous ones as a result of the "correction campaign" or amnesty period run by the government from April 3 to November 3, 2013.

Ahead of a crackdown on irregular workers/ sojourners planned for November 4, 2013, the amnesty was meant to allow workers to sort out their administrative situation:

renew expired documents; register their current employer as their sponsor; register changes in profession and in activity sector, etc., or leave without paying a penalty.

2. Institution which provides data

Ministry of Labour

3. Data availability

The figures are published in the Ministry of Labour's website (open data section) (in Arabic).

<http://portal.mol.gov.sa/ar/Statistics/Pages/opendata.aspx?m=8>

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