

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

|                 | Applications     |               |                  | Approved transfers |               |                |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
|                 | Males            | Females       | Total            | Males              | Females       | Total          |
| Riyadh          | 462,030          | 12,581        | <b>474,611</b>   | 283,376            | 4,963         | <b>288,339</b> |
| Makkah          | 356,276          | 9,427         | <b>365,703</b>   | 206,848            | 2,819         | <b>209,667</b> |
| Madinah         | 65,062           | 1,009         | <b>66,071</b>    | 37,485             | 484           | <b>37,969</b>  |
| Al-Qasseem      | 58,962           | 798           | <b>59,760</b>    | 38,350             | 406           | <b>38,756</b>  |
| Eastern         | 217,162          | 3,235         | <b>220,397</b>   | 134,800            | 1,371         | <b>136,171</b> |
| Assir           | 48,187           | 855           | <b>49,042</b>    | 26,161             | 515           | <b>26,676</b>  |
| Hail            | 17,973           | 277           | <b>18,250</b>    | 11,092             | 159           | <b>11,251</b>  |
| Tabouk          | 15,599           | 258           | <b>15,857</b>    | 8,121              | 66            | <b>8,187</b>   |
| Al-Baha         | 7,114            | 66            | <b>7,180</b>     | 4,138              | 32            | <b>4,170</b>   |
| Northern Border | 6,927            | 54            | <b>6,981</b>     | 3,862              | 20            | <b>3,882</b>   |
| Al-Jouf         | 13,733           | 160           | <b>13,893</b>    | 8,673              | 86            | <b>8,759</b>   |
| Jazan           | 20,743           | 193           | <b>20,936</b>    | 11,500             | 70            | <b>11,570</b>  |
| Najran          | 21,218           | 147           | <b>21,365</b>    | 13,436             | 78            | <b>13,514</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>1,310,986</b> | <b>29,060</b> | <b>1,340,046</b> | <b>787,842</b>     | <b>11,069</b> | <b>798,911</b> |

Source: Ministry of Labour

## 1. Definition

All foreign residents in Saudi Arabia are under the responsibility of a local "sponsor", usually the employer. Only certain categories of investors are spared the obligation.

The Saudi Labour Law has provisions allowing the worker to change 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 sponsor have been made easier for the workers in companies displaying the poorest rates of Saudisation (classified in "red" and "yellow" categories).

Workers in these categories can now freely join sponsors whose companies are in highest saudisation performance' categories ("Green" and "Premium" or "Excellent"), without NOC from previous sponsor.

Since September 2014, the obligation for a worker to stay a minimum of two years with a sponsor before applying for sponsorship' change was repealed.

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>

Last date of access: 18 December 2015.