

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

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the obligation for a worker to stay a minimum of two years with a sponsor before applying for sponsorship' change was repealed.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