

Saudi Arabia: Work visas allotted by nationality group and sex of visa holder (2013)

	Males	Females	Total
Arab countries	280,175	5,794	285,969
Non-Arab Asian countries	680,539	27,752	708,291
Non-Arab African countries	5,229	3,049	8,278
South America	639	7	646
North America	4,804	630	5,434
Europe	8,626	1,264	9,890
Oceania	633	100	733
Others	34	0	34
Total	980,679	38,596	1,019,275

Source: Ministry of Labour

1. Definitions

The labour visa allows the worker to enter Saudi Arabia. It is issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after Ministry of Labour issues its agreement. In order to employ workers from abroad, the sponsoring company must first file a "Block Visa" request with the Ministry of Labor, requesting pre-approval to sponsor foreign employees.

Once the Block Visa request is approved, the sponsoring company in Saudi Arabia should obtain a visa authorization number and an electronic power of attorney authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia. Foreign nationals may then apply for work visas through Saudi consular posts in their country of residence. Several documents are required before issuance of work visas, including medical certificate.

Therefore, work visas are more than the actual workers present in the country and granted labour permits, as some eventually do not terminate the procedure, or are rejected at a later stage (entry visa; residency procedures...).

Temporary or seasonal visas are allotted for short-term and limited employment duration, for example for the provision of services during the Hajj season in Makkah and Madina, or in agriculture.

2. Institution which provides data

Ministry of Labour of Saudi Arabia
(<http://portal.mol.gov.sa/Sites/default.aspx>)

3. Data availability

Published in Ministry of Labour's Statistical Yearbooks
MoL Yearbooks (in Arabic, PDF format) are available online at

<http://portal.mol.gov.sa/ar/Statistics/Pages/default.aspx?m=2>
(Issues 2004 to 2013)

Date of access: July 2015