

Saudi Arabia: Work visas allotted by type/ sector of activity (private sector; governmental; domestic) (2004-2017)

year	private sector	government sector	domestic sector	Total
2004	423,172	24,821	355,395	803,388
2005	352,924	32,034	339,985	724,943
2006	716,347	42,149	441,247	1,199,743
2007	1,141,601	51,935	445,106	1,638,642
2008	1,191,204	70,924	495,885	1,758,013
2009	932,494	61,143	496,092	1,489,729
2010	1,061,717	68,297	565,537	1,695,551
2011	1,181,911	110,223	647,796	1,939,930
2012	1,586,532	125,909	828,425	2,540,866
2013	950,252	57,007	714,593	1,721,852
2014	1,574,504	104,466	847,927	2,526,897
2015	1,973,391	78,882	995,930	3,048,203
2016	1,403,731	142,824	1,173,500	2,720,055
2017 Q1	146,561	12,288	155,643	314,492
2017 Q2	191,584	9,739	185,499	386,822
2017 Q3	203,021	113,661	192,498	509,180
2017 Q4	177,669	17,711	212,085	407,465
2017	718,835	153,399	745,725	1,617,959
2018 Q1	105,987	14,352	221,128	341,467
2018 Q2	199,529	14,170	180,854	394,553

1. Definitions

The labour visa allows the worker to enter Saudi Arabia. It is issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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, as some eventually do not terminate the procedure, or are rejected at a later stage (entry visa; residency procedures...).

2. Institution which provides data

Ministry of Labour, now Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD)
(<https://mlsd.gov.sa/en/node>)

3. Data availability

Until 2015, the data was published in Ministry of Labour's Statistical Yearbooks

MoL's Yearbooks until 2015 are no longer available on MLSD's website.

MLSD's Yearbook for 2016 has the figure of work visas issued that year:

<https://mlsd.gov.sa/sites/default/files/uploads/v.26%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%88%D9%8A%202016.pdf>

Figures for 2017 and 2018 are published in the Labour Force Surveys (quarterly):

<https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/814>

Last date of access: 4 November 2018.