

Saudi Arabia: Work visas issued by sector of economic activity (private sector only) (2015-2018)

	Agri., Forest, Hunting & Fishing	Mines, Oil, Gas & Quarries	Manufacturing industries	Electricity, Gas & Water	Construction	Retails & Hotels	Transports & Storage	Finance, Insurance, Real estate services & Businesses	Collective, Social, & Personal services	Other activities	TOTAL
2015	163,090	3,256	127,122	1,877	1,034,460	220,309	48,076	22,905	316,985	93,211	2,031,291
2016	79,551	1,922	83,494	973	759,137	159,761	36,042	7,956	274,303	574	1,403,713
2017	46,530	672	41,575	180	323,611	46,424	6,120	1,732	221,889	30,102	718,835
2018	54,877	1,847	33,368	275	238,877	40,843	13,156	3,916	167,453	2,713	557,325

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Development/ GStat

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, 1. work visas reflect a given year/quarter's new entries of workers to Saudi Arabia and 2. work visas issued are more than the workers effectively entering the country a given year/ quarter, as some eventually do not terminate the procedure, or are rejected at a later stage (entry visa; residency procedures...).

Totals of visas issued per year may differ slightly between publications, due to variations in the periods of reference taken (Hijri vs Gregorian years).

2. Institution which provides data

Ministry of Labour, now Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD)

3. Data availability

The present data is published in the General Authority for Statistics' (GStat) Statistical Yearbook 2018, chapter 11 "Labour and Social Security"
<https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/258>

Last date of access: December 2019.