The Premium Residency Programme in Saudi Arabia: History, Design, Acquisition Dynamics, and Holder Profile

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Executive Summary

Saudi Arabia's Premium Residency (PR) should be understood as part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy to attract investors, entrepreneurs, and highly skilled professionals, thereby supporting economic diversification, innovation, and knowledge transfer. This brief analyses the evolution of the Saudi PR system from its 2019 legal launch to its 2024 expansion into seven products, and examines what limited available data reveal about acquisition dynamics and holder profiles. The evidence suggests a large registration and application funnel but selective conversion, with inflows concentrated in talent-oriented and investor categories. Holders appear predominantly mid- to late career, overwhelmingly married, and regionally concentrated among nationals from Asian and North African countries. The brief argues that PR is evolving from a broad settlement privilege into a more targeted economic instrument linked to labour-market needs, capital attraction, and family retention. It recommends improving public data quality and disclosure, measuring investor and talent outcomes more systematically, publishing gender-disaggregated statistics, strengthening family-integration measures including youth and retirees, and widening access for highly skilled Saudi-born young professionals.