



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

European Union - Brussels

Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the European Union

April, 2021

Green energies:
SOLAR POWER

Message from the Ambassador
**HE Saad Bin
Mohammed Alarify**

*Welcome to the monthly newsletter of the Mission
of Saudi Arabia to the European Union*



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In this edition



April was a month of celebration for us, the Ramadan crescent moon has been sighted in Saudi Arabia, meaning the holy month officially began. We hope this month has brought peace to all of you.

Since our last communication, Saudi Arabia has been working with like-minded partners, like the European Union, on green initiatives to get closer to our Vision 2030. Read more about our initiatives and other interesting topics in this edition.

On behalf of the Mission of Saudi Arabia to the European Union, we are delighted to stay in touch with you.

**Warm Regards,
HE Saad Bin Mohammed Al-arify**

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Green energies: SOLAR POWER

As Saudi Arabia connected a 300 MW photovoltaic facility to the grid, it revealed deals have just been signed for the construction of seven solar power plants with a combined capacity of almost 3.7 GW. One of the power purchase agreements sets the price at just USD 10.4 per MWh, a level unseen before in the industry.

The oil demand could start to wane in the coming years, and the reserves of fossil fuel won't last forever, so one of the largest producers and exporters is joining the global trend of diversifying energy sources. Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman announced contracts have been signed for seven utility-scale solar power plants.

Local company ACWA Power and its partners agreed to sell electricity produced in a future 600 MW photovoltaic system for only USD 10.4 per MWh.

The planned construction of seven utility-scale solar power plants is part of the Vision 2030 project

ACWA Power plans to build the Shuaibah project with Gulf Investment and Al Babtain Contracting, Saudi Minister of Energy Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud said.

The Sudair photovoltaic plant will be the biggest among the seven projects – 1.5 GW, which would make it one of the largest in the world, too. The site is 130 kilometers north of Riyadh. The start of construction is scheduled for the second half of next year. The power purchase agreement is for 25 years.

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Saudi Arabia's green initiatives: great interest from UN officials

The UN is following with great interest the Kingdom's Saudi Green and Middle East Green initiatives, which call for regional cooperation to tackle the environmental challenges facing Saudi Arabia and the wider region.

The initiatives include a number of ambitious projects designed to reduce carbon emissions in the region by 60%. This will be achieved mainly through the use of clean hydrocarbon technologies and the planting of 50 billion trees, including 10 billion in the Kingdom. Claimed to be the world's largest afforestation project, it will also help to revive millions of hectares of deteriorated land.

In addition, the initiatives aim to preserve marine and coastal environments, increase the proportion of natural reserves and protected land, improve the regulation of oil production, accelerate the transition to clean energy and boost the amount of energy generated by renewables.

The Saudi initiatives stress the importance of partnerships between neighboring countries in efforts to address environmental challenges and improve the quality of life for people in the region.

"We're following with great interest the efforts made by countries like Saudi Arabia to step up their climate ambitions," said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Marcel Alers, the head of energy at the UN Development Program (UNDP), highlighted Saudi Arabia as a country that is already taking the lead on climate change.

Authorities in Saudi Arabia are looking to the future, Alers said, and repositioning the country as a pioneer in the adoption of new technologies. ***"The Saudis could be the leaders for the energy revolution of tomorrow,"*** he added.

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Sustainable investment, the Riyadh summit

Thought leaders in sustainable investment gathered virtually in Riyadh on 15 April to explore one of the hottest topics in the world of finance — the move to environmental, social and governance (ESG) benchmarks by big global investors.

The event, under the auspices of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Institute, focused attention on sustainable investment in post-pandemic recovery, and the role of emerging markets like Saudi Arabia within the new investment philosophy.

Although sustainable investment has been advocated as a concept for many years, it has taken off recently against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, which persuaded many traditional big investors to look again at their basic criteria.

“The event offered insights into how to boost participation of emerging markets in ESG and also deep dive into the role of ESG

FUTURE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

Powered by the Future Investment Initiative Institute



across corporations, retail investing, and monetary policy in pursuit of a sustainable world,” the FII Institute said.

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A photograph of two men standing in an office. The man on the left is wearing a dark suit and a light blue tie, holding a framed Guinness World Record certificate. The man on the right is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and is pointing at the certificate. The certificate is for the lowest water desalination energy consumption. In the background, there is a Saudi Arabian flag, a framed picture of a ship, and a vase of flowers.

Desalinate seawater: a new Guinness World Record

Saudi Arabia's SWCC, the Largest Desalination Corporation Globally, achieved a new Guinness World Record for the lowest Water Desalination Energy Consumption

Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) was recognized by Guinness World Records for setting a global record in reducing energy consumption in water desalination to 2.271 kWh per cubic meter, cementing its position as a pioneer in promoting environmental sustainability, achieved this milestone by adopting innovative technologies that lower the use of power and cost of produced water in the desalination industry.

The technology used in the plants is reverse osmosis (RO), which is by SWCC standards and specifications that is uniquely re-engineered to develop supply chains and reduce operational costs while achieving positive financial returns as an outcome of reducing electricity consumption from reverse osmosis

plants by 2.271 kWh per cubic meter. The new plants are seawater take systems powered by energy recovery techniques and equipped with high-efficiency pumps energy recovery device (ERD).

"We are proud of this milestone achievement featured in Guinness World Records. In line with Vision 2030, the SWCC works to enable local talent in its current and future developmental projects; this initiative covered the full project life cycle utilizing pre-existing competencies and expertise to localize the desalination industry fully," His Excellency Eng. Abdullah Ibrahim Al-Abdulkareem, Saline Water Conversion Corporation Governor

SWCC has significantly reduced gas emissions from its production systems in carbon dioxide by 22% of the total targeted reduction for the Kingdom until 2030.

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The green pedestrian spine

AlUla will soon enjoy a second chance at glory thanks to The Journey Through Time, a master plan developed under the leadership of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, chairman of the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), and the guidance of Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan, the Saudi minister of culture and governor of the RCU.

The plan, announced on April 7, falls under Saudi Arabia's broader Vision 2030 strategy to radically diversify its economy away from oil and embrace the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors and a host of other cultural and creative industries as it opens up to the world.

Visitors will begin their journey at AlUla Old Town in the south before moving north into Dadan, Jabal Ikmah and the Nabataean Horizon, before concluding at Hegra Historical City, home of Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage site. Each district will be shaped around its specific natural and cultural heritage.

A 46-km low-carbon tram line will connect AlUla International Airport to the five districts

and a scenic roadway will allow visitors to travel by car or, if they prefer another immersive option, on foot, by bicycle, or even on horseback.

To accommodate the expected flood of visitors, planners will provide 5,000 additional rooms to the overall target of 9,400 by 2035. These will range from luxury hotels to eco-tourism lodges.

In Saudi Arabia's drive to develop AlUla and open its treasures to the world, it is important to note that a crucial part of the Journey Through Time master plan is about empowering and educating the local population.

"We believe that empowering the community, which has been the cultural custodian of this county, will lead to a stronger tourism, cultural and agricultural economy for AlUla," RCU spokesperson, Saad Al-Matrafi, told Arab News.

"Through these comprehensive measures, we hope to revitalize AlUla as a vibrant and thriving Saudi community."

[Click here for more information](#)



The Red Sea Project: a sustainable and breathtaking experience

Occupying 28,000 sq/km of pristine land off the west coast of the Kingdom, The Red Sea Project will combine innovative design with sustainability and breathtaking nature experiences.

Ecotourism is the biggest trend in travel right now, and thanks to climate change, it won't fade in the future. But there's another exciting new development on the horizon, too: regenerative tourism. The pioneer is Saudi Arabia's trailblazing Red Sea Project, opening in 2022, which is one of the first global destinations to take this proactive approach.

The Red Sea Project will be powered by 100% renewable energy, will feature low-waste buildings constructed with sustainable materials, and will leave 75% of its vast landscape as an uninhabited paradise.

The location of waterside guest villas has been planned in accordance with extensive marine investigations, in order to safeguard coral reefs and sea currents.

Light and noise pollution is minimised, and single-use plastics banned. In addition, the

annual number of visitors will be carefully managed to avoid over-tourism, with the intention to deliver a net positive conservation benefit of up to 30% by 2040.

The first phase of the resort will see five islands thoughtfully developed and the opening of an international airport, designed by global architecture practice Foster + Partners. The latter will make The Red Sea Project accessible to 80% of the global population with just an eight-hour flight. Once they arrive, guests will not only be able to explore islands and roam across desert plains, but can also take advantage of a varied and immersive programme of cultural, educational and wellness activities, which can be customized to indulge their interests.

By the time it's completed in 2030, the resort will have 50 hotels and around 1,300 residences across 22 islands and six inland sites. The idea is that visitors can "island hop" to create their perfect bespoke holiday, encountering everything from traditional Arab cuisine and crafts to archaeological relics along the way.

[Click here for more information](#)



Yemen: the peace initiative

The Yemeni government, local officials and displaced people on 26 April 2021 welcomed the Saudi initiative to halt the war in Yemen, and called on the Houthis to accept it and end more than six years of conflict.

Yemen's Foreign Ministry said the Saudi plan is compatible with the Yemeni government's repeated calls for peace and an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people.

"The Yemeni government is fully aware that ending the suffering of Yemenis will only be done by ending the coup and the war that was sparked by the Houthi militia," the ministry said. ***"(The government) is committed to all peace efforts to end the coup, restore the state and reject Iran's destructive project in Yemen."***

The effects of the war and Houthi oppression forced tens of thousands of Yemenis in Houthi-controlled regions to flee their homes. They are now living in displacement camps in areas under government control.

Health officials in Yemen have also called for a halt to the fighting across the country so that they can work to contain a new wave of COVID-19 infections that has started to claim dozens of lives in the past few days.

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New forums for women entrepreneurs

A new business initiative aims to bring together female Saudi entrepreneurs with their American counterparts, including business leaders, in the hopes of forging connections and creating partnership opportunities.

Igniting Women's Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Saudi Arabia, or Ignite for short, will host workshops and networking events during which women in the two countries can share insights and develop businesses.

The program was announced by the US mission to Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with the Atlantic Council's empowerME initiative, the American Chamber of Commerce of Saudi Arabia, and Quantum Leaps, an organization for female entrepreneurs.

The project aims to provide women in the Kingdom with resources to help them pursue careers as CEOs, investors and startup owners so that they can contribute to job creation and positive economic change.

The idea for Ignite began to take shape last year, when Saudi Arabia held the presidency of the G20, during sessions of the forum's Women 20 engagement group.

Women in Saudi Arabia have already participated in business initiatives by US companies such as UPS, ExxonMobil and Lockheed Martin. The Ignite program also aims to help US entrepreneurs become involved in Saudi Arabia's economic transformation under the Kingdom's sweeping Vision 2030 reform program.

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empowerME





The KSA gives support to startups through the new Riyadh Techstars Accelerator Program

Techstars and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have partnered to launch The Riyadh Techstars Accelerator.

The accelerator will work with startups and entrepreneurs building and growing their businesses in the Middle East and North Africa.

The accelerator is an extension of earlier cooperation between the Ministry and Techstars last July through the Techstars Startup Weekend COVID-19 KSA, where more than 550 Saudi entrepreneurs, of which two thirds were female, attended virtual panels, workshops and networking events to address challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Riyadh Techstars Accelerator will begin accepting applications May 10, 2021, for a 13-week program that will take place from November 2021 through February 2022.

A Techstars Managing Director will lead the accelerator with support from a Techstars program manager, along with leadership and mentors from MCIT.

Participants in the three-month program will receive funding, hands-on mentorship from the Techstars and MCIT networks, access to curated workshops and resources, and access to the Techstars global network for life.

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Saudi women lead the charge in growing SMEs

Saudi women were known to own their businesses long before the social reforms took place, but the trend has grown extensively as changes pushed many into the business world, diversifying the market, their source of income, and contributing to the Kingdom's gross domestic product.

According to a World Bank report, the number of Saudi women entrepreneurs increased by 50% between 2018 and 2019, particularly in the consumer service sector. According to a Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report in 2020, the highest rates of women's entrepreneurial intentions were reported in the Middle East and North Africa region at 36.6%. Saudi female entrepreneurs were responsible for driving this trend.

Reforms in the Kingdom have provided funding to projects and initiatives, which have created opportunities for women in

government and the private sector. These reforms have played an integral part in creating safe work environments to foster growth and innovation.

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Saudi Arabia keen to protect women's rights and enhance their role in social development

Saudi Arabia has affirmed its commitment to women's rights and said that advancing their role locally, regionally and globally is a top priority for the Kingdom's leaders.

Speaking at the closing statement during the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN headquarters in New York, Mona Saleh Al-Ghamdi, a member of Saudi Arabia's delegation, said that the Kingdom sought to enhance women's roles in social development through empowering them to participate in decision-making processes in all government and private sectors socially, economically and politically.

Al-Ghamdi confirmed the delegation's interest in coming up with a document that reinforced the progress of historical reforms the Kingdom continued to achieve under the leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

CSW65
2021



"The leadership considers women as active members in all areas of national development," she said. "She is the fundamental core of the family and society, as well as a key member in achieving Saudi Vision 2030 that reinforced reforms in the status of women and their empowerment to easily perform their national duties."

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HRC President Receives Ambassador of EU to Saudi Arabia

Dr. Awwad Al-Awwad, president of the Human Rights Commission, held separate meetings with Patrick Simonnet, EU ambassador to the Kingdom, and French Ambassador Ludovic Pouille at his office in Riyadh on 12 April.

Among over 60 recent decisions made to improve the situation of human rights in the Kingdom, 22 were related to women.

[Click here for more information](#)

During the meetings, Saudi Arabia's rights chief discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Saudi Arabia, the EU, and France in the field of human rights.

Al-Awwad highlighted the Kingdom's measures taken to ensure human rights in light of Vision 2030. He briefed the ambassadors on the various steps the Kingdom has taken for the protection of human rights. Al-Awwad said that the HRC is ready to cooperate with all local, regional, and international establishments working in the field of human rights.

Saudi Arabia is witnessing a qualitative leap in the field of human rights. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 program is at the forefront of these reforms intended to focus on humans.





Fighting stereotypes

Saudi female participation across the sporting landscape may be blossoming these days, but in many cases, the seeds for the current success were sown decades ago.

Boxing and other martial arts have always been male-dominated sports globally, and across the Middle East and in Saudi Arabia. But women in the Kingdom are becoming increasingly adept at breaking stereotypes and celebrating their own achievements in sports, and beyond.

Halah Al-Hamrani has been teaching boxing for 20 years and, in 2016, opened her first gym, Flagboxing, in Jeddah. Before the 2020 lockdown following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, she followed that up with a second center.

However, her journey as a boxing trainer began at her family home, as public gyms for women were rare. Things have changed rapidly, according to Al-Hamrani, who has

seen women's participation in the sport rise by up to 70% in the last two decades.

But more recently, thanks to social media as well as social and cultural changes in the Kingdom, that there has been an explosion in the number of women lacing up their gloves.

With long-term habits in the bag, it won't be long before we see young female Saudi fighters making their mark competitively in the ring.

[Click here for more information](#)





SAB express and its Saudi Female Customs program

SAB Express, a FedEx Express global service provider in Saudi Arabia, announced that Sheikh Salah Al Bluewi, the Chairman, has signed the CEO statement of support for the Women's Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business.

Established by the United Nations Global Compact and United Nations Women, the Women's Empowerment Principles are a set of seven actions that companies choose to adopt to advance gender equality in the workplace and community.

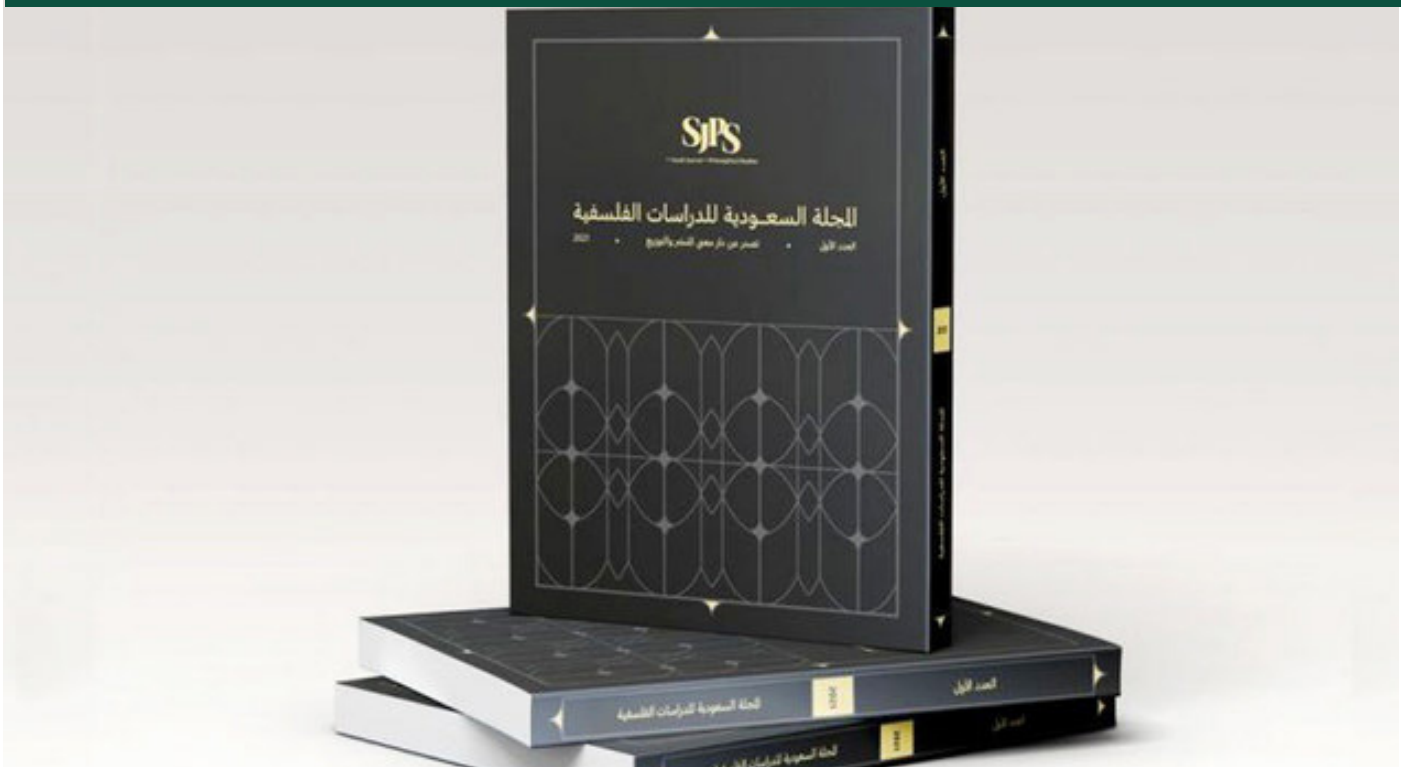
Sheikh Salah endorsed the statement of support in the presence of the company leadership and team members in Jeddah.

As part of the company's commitment to empowering women, SAB Express is launching a Saudi Female Customs program in

cooperation with the Saudi Customs Authority, aiming to staff nearly a third of the company's customs agents positions with women. The Saudi Female Customs program will focus on providing employment opportunities to Saudi female graduates and developing their skills in customs clearance.

This initiative aligns closely with the overarching theme of Saudi Vision 2030 of making the Kingdom a diverse and sustainable economy. A strategic partnership with Saudi Customs effectively meets the Saudi Vision 2030 goals. It demonstrates SAB's commitment to investing in Saudization and fostering a diverse and inclusive organizational culture that offers increased employment opportunities for women.

[Click here for more information](#)



Saudi Arabia's first philosophy journal breaks new ground

Saudi Arabia's first philosophy journal has been issued. The [Saudi Journal of Philosophical Studies \(SJPS\)](#) was launched by the cultural platform Mana, which was set up two years ago.

According to its editor in chief, Sarah Al-Rajhi, the principal aim of the journal was to help researchers in the Kingdom, the Arab world and the West to publish their work without any financial cost and in line with accurate scientific standards.

She said that the SJPS advisory board included 12 leading thinkers and philosophers from the Arab world and the West, and that this number was appropriate because each member represented an orientation and school of thought.

The scholars were chosen on the basis of precise criteria, the most important of which were their research, their recognition by the scientific research community, their "abundant philosophical production" and their geographical distribution.

The advisory board includes members from Saudi Arabia, the US, Australia, the UK, Senegal, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria.

Al-Rajhi, who is the co-founder of Mana, said the journal could contribute to strengthening the Kingdom's philosophical movement and that the encouragement of academic publishing in the field of philosophy was the pinnacle of this movement.

[Click here for more information](#)



Faces of
Saudi Arabia

**Dr. Maha
Al Mozaini**



**Scientist & Director of
Immunocompromised Host Research-King
Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research
Center- Riyadh**



She heads a special unit for the research of immunodeficiency diseases and supervises a group of scientists, technicians and graduate students in this field. She established the first HIV laboratory at King Faisal Specialist Hospital whereby she developed a large number of medical laboratories in Saudi Arabia. L'Oréal and UNESCO granted her the award for the **"best woman in science"** in the Middle East and North Africa for her outstanding research and achievements in the field of immunodeficiency diseases. She holds a PhD in the field of virology and immunology, and this field has opened her door to many discoveries.

Al Mozaini stands out in other ways too. This includes what she has done to support female

carriers of HIV/AIDS and help save them from the stigma that surrounds the disease. She was behind getting a non-profit organisation for women living with HIV, including those who inadvertently contracted the virus through heterosexual contact with their husbands, approved. The researcher, a former research fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital/ Harvard Medical School's infectious disease division, is also known for empowering and mentoring young women in STEM.

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