

KHUTA

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the
Development Ecosystem in the Kingdom



Women in the Economy

Empowerment Driving Transformation

Towards the Future of Development

20th Edition

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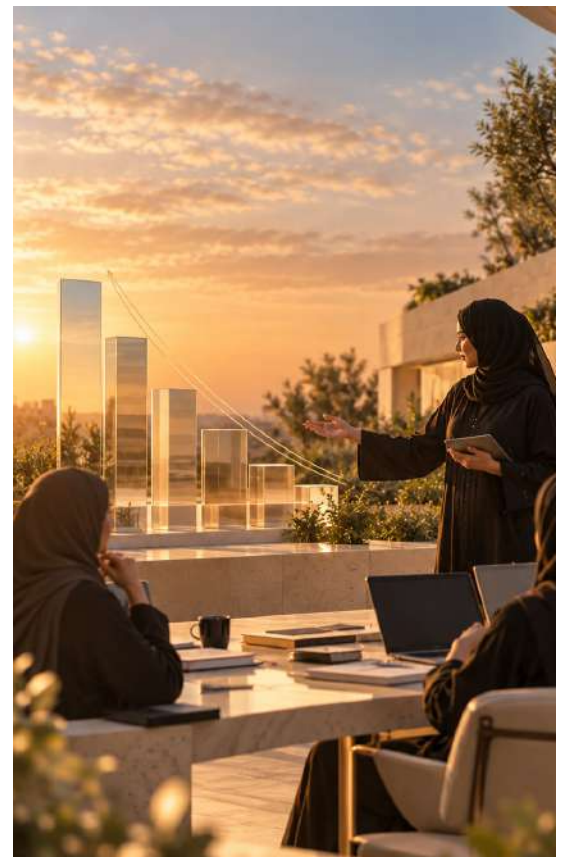


From Empowerment to Impact... Women as Partners in Building the Economy of the Future

On the development journey, achievements are measured not by numbers alone, but by the opportunities they create and the impact they leave behind. From this perspective, the Kingdom has witnessed a qualitative transformation in women's economic empowerment, reflected in their broader participation in the labor market, growing presence in promising sectors, and contribution to economic growth. It is a journey that confirms that investing in national talent is an investment in a more prosperous and sustainable future.

According to the Saudi Vision 2030 Annual Report 2025, Saudi women's labor force participation rose to 36.6%, compared with 22.8% at the launch of the Vision, surpassing the previous target of 30% and moving closer to the new target of 40%. This progress reflects an integrated system of reforms focused on capability development, aligning education outcomes with labor market needs, and expanding flexible work models, helping strengthen the competitiveness of the national economy and improve human capital efficiency.

The National Transformation Program Achievements Report 2025 also indicates that the impact of this transformation has extended to women's presence in leadership and decision-making roles, with women accounting for 43.9% of middle and senior management positions. At the same time, the National Development Fund ecosystem continued to broaden the impact of this empowerment. The Human Resources Development Fund supported women's stability in the labor market, with more than 370,000 women benefiting from the Wusool program and more than 52,000 from the Qurrah program. Meanwhile, the Social Development Bank continued to empower self-employment and entrepreneurship, with more than 151,000 productive families benefiting from its programs by 2025—embodying a journey that begins with empowerment, extends to productivity, and culminates in contributing to national economic growth and the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.



Sources:

- Saudi Vision 2030 Annual Report 2025
- National Transformation Program Achievements Report 2025



Women's economic empowerment has become a key pillar in building more productive and competitive economies. It is no longer viewed as a social track separate from economic policy, but as an investment in human capital that enables countries to make full use of their national talent and capabilities while broadening participation in production and value creation.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) affirms that expanding women's economic opportunities helps raise productivity, reduce poverty, and build more inclusive and resilient economies. This impact stems from economies' ability to deploy talent according to skills and experience while reducing barriers that may limit access to employment, finance, or entrepreneurship.

The impact of economic empowerment goes beyond increasing labor market participation to include the quality and sustainability of that participation. Flexible work environments, skills development, and opportunities for career progression help retain talent in the labor market and increase its productive contribution. Diversity within institutions also brings a wider range of perspectives, improves decision-making, and strengthens the capacity for innovation and responsiveness to economic and technological change.

Entrepreneurship is an important pathway for translating empowerment into tangible economic impact. It enables women to move from seeking opportunities to creating them by establishing businesses, developing products and services, creating jobs, and stimulating markets. This requires broader access to finance, stronger financial literacy, professional networks, and advisory services that help businesses sustain and grow.

In the Kingdom, this direction aligns with the economic growth model adopted by Saudi Vision 2030, which is built on empowering people, developing their capabilities, and expanding their role in economic activity. The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2026 report reflects the strength of policies, programs, and institutions supporting women's economic participation. Saudi Arabia scored 71.95 out of 100 on the indicator measuring the availability of these policies and programs, exceeding the global average of 46.83 and the regional average of 36.25. The report also noted that Saudi Arabia's supportive policies and institutions are among the strongest in the Middle East and North Africa and identified three reforms implemented between October 2023 and October 2025 that strengthened equality in employment and entrepreneurship.

These results confirm that the value of empowerment is not limited to expanding women's participation in the labor market; it also extends to stronger productivity, innovation, and economic competitiveness, making women's empowerment a long-term investment in sustainable growth.

Sources:

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Women's Economic Empowerment
- World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2026
- Official Saudi Vision 2030 website, "Saudi Arabia's Economic Growth Model: Empowering People to Build the Nation."



National Development Fund and Bpifrance Sign MoU to Strengthen Strategic Cooperation

The National Development Fund (NDF) signed an MoU with Bpifrance in the presence of NDF Governor H.E. Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Arifi, on the sidelines of the visit of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to the French Republic. The MoU aims to strengthen the strategic partnership, advance cooperation in development finance and investment between Saudi Arabia's development ecosystem and its French counterparts and explore joint opportunities that support priority sectors and encourage private-sector participation, thereby enhancing sustainable economic and development impact. The MoU covers the exploration of joint financing and investment opportunities, the application of global best practices, and the exchange of knowledge and expertise in development finance. It also focuses on developing institutional and human capabilities and leveraging international expertise in designing financing models and investment solutions, helping translate areas of cooperation into actionable initiatives and projects that deliver sustainable development impact.

National Development Fund Signs MoU with Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University to Support Development Research and Innovation

The National Development Fund (NDF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) to strengthen cooperation in financial, economic, and research fields and support the development of priority studies and applied research. NDF was represented at the signing by Mr. Thamer Aljared, Deputy Governor for Development, Economic Research, and Policy Support, while the university was represented by Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi, Vice President for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. The MoU includes knowledge and expertise exchange, joint research programs, and support for student participation and cooperative training opportunities, strengthening integration between the development and academic sectors and supporting evidence-based decision-making.



حندوق
التنمية الوطني
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FUND



Agricultural Development Fund and Makkah Region Development Authority Join Forces to Support Sustainable Agricultural Development

صندوق التنمية الزراعية
Agricultural Development Fund
المملكة العربية السعودية



The Makkah Region Development Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) to strengthen cooperation in advancing sustainable agricultural development in the Makkah Region and supporting high-quality agricultural investments and projects, thereby maximizing the potential of the region's governorates. The MoU supports agricultural investments and projects and the development of studies, data, and agricultural indicators to inform planning and decision-making. It also focuses on empowering farmers and building capabilities through the exchange of expertise and knowledge and the delivery of training and awareness programs. Areas of cooperation include supporting and developing urban observatory indicators related to the agricultural sector, providing data and insights that enhance agricultural development planning across the region.



Saudi Fund for Development Highlights Impact of Saudi Arabia's Development Support for Palestinian Refugees in Jordan

Sultan bin Abdulrahman Al-Marshad, CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), met with Christian Saunders, Acting Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They conducted a field visit to the preparatory school project in New Amman Camp and the Al-Zohour Health Center project, in the presence of Mohammed Mounis, Deputy Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through SFD, the projects reflect the Kingdom's development and humanitarian mission and its commitment to supporting Palestinian refugees.



Real Estate Development Fund Deposits SAR 1.074 Billion for Housing Support Program Beneficiaries for August

The Real Estate Development Fund (REDF) announced the deposit of SAR 1.074 billion into the accounts of Housing Support Program beneficiaries of the Housing Support Program provided by the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing and REDF for August 2026. The amount was allocated to subsidize profits on various housing support program contracts, enabling beneficiaries and improving their ability to own homes in support of the Housing Program's objectives, one of the programs under Saudi Vision 2030.



Cultural Development Fund Launches “AI Incentives for Cultural Projects”

The Cultural Development Fund (CDF) launched “AI Incentives for Cultural Projects” in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Quality of Life Program, one of the Saudi Vision 2030 realization programs, and in collaboration with the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA). The initiative is the first track under “Namaa Incentives,” which supports cultural projects in high-impact fields aligned with national priorities and strengthens their capacity for growth and innovation, maximizing their economic and social impact and long-term sustainability. The track targets micro, small, and medium-sized cultural enterprises seeking to adopt or develop artificial intelligence technologies within their projects. Eligible projects can receive financial incentives of up to SAR 500,000 to develop and adopt innovative AI-powered solutions.



Jeddah Mayor Receives Tourism Development Fund CEO

H.E. Ehsan bin Abbas Bafaqih, Mayor of Jeddah, received Qusai bin Abdullah Al-Fakhri, CEO of the Tourism Development Fund (TDF), at the municipality's headquarters. The meeting explored opportunities for cooperation in supporting tourism investments and developing high-quality projects and destinations in Jeddah, strengthening the city's appeal to tourists and investors. The meeting reflects the two sides' integrated efforts to support tourism-sector growth, stimulate private-sector participation, and leverage Jeddah's distinctive assets. These efforts contribute to developing diverse tourism experiences, improving the quality of destinations and visitor services, supporting the National Tourism Strategy and Saudi Vision 2030, and strengthening Jeddah's position as a leading tourism destination locally and regionally.

Social Development Bank Signs Agreement to Launch SAR 10 Million Social Investment Financing Portfolio

The Social Development Bank (SDB) and Nmal for Social Investment signed a cooperation agreement to establish a joint SAR 10 million financing portfolio to support and empower entrepreneurs and startups in social investment fields, in line with Saudi Vision 2030 objectives for building a vibrant and sustainable economy. Under the partnership, SDB will manage and operate the portfolio and allocate its funding to entrepreneurs in targeted areas, including human health, environmental responsibility, and social impact. The initiative aims to stimulate innovative ideas, strengthen the role of small and emerging enterprises in contributing to GDP growth, and create sustainable employment opportunities.



Human Resources Development Fund Contributes to Employment of 329,000 Saudis in H1 2026, Up 23%

The Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) contributed to the employment of 329,000 Saudi citizens during the first half of 2026, representing an increase of %23 compared with the same period in 2025. Direct support provided to individuals and enterprises benefiting from HRDF's training, empowerment, and career guidance programs reached approximately SAR 4.9 billion. The number of beneficiaries exceeded 1.69 million citizens, while more than 171,000 enterprises benefited from the Fund's services, up %25. These results reflect HRDF's continued development of its support and empowerment ecosystem, enhancing the efficiency of national human capital, increasing labor market productivity, and advancing the objectives of the National Labor Market Strategy.



Saudi EXIM Bank Provides SAR 27.67 Billion in Credit Facilities During H1 2026

Saudi EXIM Bank recorded growth in credit facilities provided during the first half of 2026, reaching SAR 27.67 billion, an increase of %17.20 compared with SAR 23.61 billion during the same period in 2025. This growth aligns with the Bank's strategy to enable Saudi non-oil exports and strengthen their competitiveness in global markets.

The credit facilities comprised financing and insurance for Saudi non-oil product and service. Export financing disbursements totaled SAR 8.20 billion by the end of June 2026, compared with SAR 8.87 billion during the same period last year. Exports covered by export credit insurance reached SAR 19.47 billion, an increase of %32.09 from SAR 14.74 billion during the corresponding period in 2025.



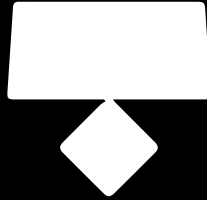
SME Bank's Kafalah Program Surpasses SAR 100 Billion in Financing Guarantees

The Small and Medium Enterprises Bank (SME Bank) announced that financing guarantees provided through the Small and Medium Enterprises Loan Guarantee Program (Kafalah) surpassed SAR 100 billion, benefiting more than 28,000 enterprises and enabling over SAR 140 billion in total financing. The program supported 51 medium-sized enterprises in transitioning to the Nomu Parallel Market, while %8 of microenterprises advanced to the small or medium-sized enterprise category and %4 of small enterprises advanced to the medium-sized category. Beneficiary enterprises also recorded a %17 increase in employment, while the program's contribution to GDP over the past five years was estimated at approximately SAR 27 billion. SME Bank continues to expand enterprises' access to financing, supporting their growth and sustainability and strengthening their contribution to the national economy.





Watch Here



Lubna Al-Khamis explores the journey of working mothers as they balance ambition and responsibility, and discusses how supportive policies can support women's retention and continued participation in the labor market and help them sustain their professional careers.

Super Mama
Abajora Podcast



Monthly Highlights

Awareness tour introducing commercial franchising its regulations and implementing rules; connecting entrepreneurs and investors with relevant entities; and supporting enterprise expansion through the franchise model.

3 August

Awareness content highlighting the Bank's role in empowering youth, turning their ideas into sustainable ventures, and introducing solutions and services that support entrepreneurship.

12 August

Announcement Saudi Venture Capital (SVC) Company's investment in the Outliers fund, supporting startup growth and strengthening the venture capital ecosystem.

19 August

SME Bank

بنك المنشآت الصغيرة والمتوسطة
Small & Medium Enterprises Bank

"Export Safely" awareness campaign introducing export credit insurance and its role in protecting local exporters against non-payment risks and supporting their expansion into international markets.

2–30 August

SAUDI EXIM

بنك التصدير والاستيراد السعودي

"Every 5 Minutes" awareness campaign highlighting the role of housing support programs in enabling Saudi families to own their first home and facilitating the homeownership journey.

2 August

صندوق التنمية العقارية

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT FUND





Reflecting the Impact of Empowering the Cultural Sector to Develop Creative Projects

Tfnn: Smart Solutions for the Future of Fashion

At a time when the world is undergoing rapid transformation driven by modern technologies, Noura Al-Mahmoud chose to turn this change into an opportunity to reimagine Saudi Arabia's fashion industry. Driven by her passion for design and her belief that innovation is the future of the creative industries, she founded Tfnn, a platform that uses artificial intelligence to advance fashion design and manufacturing processes, improve production efficiency, and enable designers and enterprises to adopt more advanced digital solutions.

Tfnn is more than a technology venture; it is a vision for building an ecosystem ready for the future of fashion by bringing creativity and technology together and providing solutions that improve product quality, accelerate production, and strengthen the sector's competitiveness locally and globally.

As Tfnn evolved, support from the Cultural Development Fund marked an important milestone in the project's journey, contributing to business development and the exploration of new avenues for growth and innovation. The journey has also been recognized through several achievements, including winning the "Ebtker" Award from Monsha'at and securing third place in the TiE Women Dubai competition, underscoring the project's promising potential within the creative economy.

Tfnn's story embodies a model of an ambitious national project supported by development enablers, where creativity and technology come together to deliver innovative solutions that advance the fashion sector, strengthen its competitiveness, and reinforce the cultural sector as one of the national economy's promising sectors—reflecting the impact of empowering national talent to build a more innovative and sustainable future.





رؤية VISION
2030
المملكة العربية السعودية
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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