

Global Immigration alert

February 2026

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia increases Saudization rates for roles in the sales and marketing sectors

Executive summary

On 19 January 2026, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) [announced](#) two decisions regarding Saudization (localization) rates for roles in the sales and marketing sectors. The decisions introduce a 60% Saudization requirement for targeted professions, with specific salary criteria applicable to marketing roles. Employers have a three-month grace period to achieve compliance.

Background

Saudization, also known as Nitaqat, is a policy by the MHRSD that mandates companies operating in the private sector to employ Saudi nationals in designated professions based on prescribed quotas. The objective is to expand employment opportunities for Saudi nationals and align workforce outcomes with national labor market needs.

Key developments

The MHRSD announcement introduces the following changes:

- **Sales sector:** The Saudization rate for roles in the sales sector has been set at 60%. This requirement applies to private sector companies employing three or more workers in sales professions, as defined by the Saudi Standard Classification of Professions (SSCOP). The Saudization rate applies to nine job roles, including sales manager, retail sales manager, wholesale sales manager and sales representative. Impacted employers have a three-month grace period that began on 19 January to ensure readiness and compliance.

- **Marketing sector:** The Saudization rate for roles in the marketing sector has also been set at 60%. This requirement applies to companies employing three or more workers in marketing professions, as defined by the SSCOP. To qualify for inclusion in the Saudization calculation, Saudi employees in marketing roles must earn a minimum monthly wage of SAR 5,500 as registered with the General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI). Employees earning less will not be counted in the quota. The Saudization rate applies to 10 job roles, including marketing manager, advertising specialist, public relations specialist, graphic designer and photographer. Impacted employers have a three-month grace period that began on 19 January to ensure readiness and compliance.

Impact on employers

During the three-month grace period, employers may reassess their workforce planning, job classification practices and salary structures (particularly for marketing roles subject to the minimum wage requirement) to comply with the new localization ratios. Non-compliance may result in penalties under the MHRSD's enforcement framework.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.



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