



Shape the future
with confidence

Global Immigration alert

April 2026

The better the question. The better the answer.
The better the world works.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia tightens Qiwa contract rules and ties Saudization to documented Saudi employees

Executive summary

On 12 April 2026, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) announced changes that significantly increase the importance of documenting employment contracts on the Qiwa platform. Under the new rules, Qiwa documented contracts will directly impact access to immigration and labor services, as well as Saudization calculations.

Key developments

Key changes include the following:

- *Employment contract documentation thresholds:* The MHRSD has introduced a phased increase in the mandatory employment contract documentation rate on the Qiwa platform, now positioned as a core compliance indicator for employers. Employers must demonstrate:
 - 85% documented employment contracts effective 30 April 2026
 - 90% documented employment contracts effective by 30 June 2026

If employers do not meet these thresholds, their access to immigration and labor-related services on the Qiwa platform may be suspended.

- *Qiwa contracts required for Saudization:* Effective 15 April 2026, only Saudi nationals whose employment contracts are electronically documented on the Qiwa platform will be counted toward an establishment's Saudization ratio.

Impact on employers

These changes significantly increase employers' compliance obligations. Undocumented contracts on Qiwa can affect access to immigration and labor services, disrupt workforce management, and negatively impact Saudization status. Making timely and accurate Qiwa contract documentation is essential to avoid operational risk in the business.

Key steps

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

EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

© 2026 EYGM Limited.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 002878-26Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as accounting, tax, legal or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

ey.com

Xavier Brun
Partner, People Advisory Services Tax, MENA Immigration
Tel: +973 3365 1121
Email: xavier.brun@bh.ey.com

Emma Barnett
Senior Manager, People Advisory Services Tax, Saudi Immigration
Tel: +971 565018751
Email: emma.barnett@ae.ey.com

Ben Willis
Partner, EY Global Immigration Competency Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 9589
Email: ben.willis@uk.ey.com