

GSBM

GERMAN-SAUDI BUSINESS MAGAZINE

May 2020

Economy

**GERMAN
COMPANIES
UNDER COVID-19**

GESALaw

**SAUDI LEGAL
NEWS**

Culture & Tourism

**JOURNEY TO
JABAL AL-LAWZ**

Vision 2030

KINGDOM IN TRANSITION



AHK

Delegation der Deutschen Wirtschaft
für Saudi-Arabien, Bahrain und Jemen
German-Saudi Arabian Liaison Office
for Economic Affairs (GESALO)
مكتب الإتصال الألماني السعودي للشؤون الاقتصادية

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EDITORIAL

Dear Partners,

When we started planning this GSBM issue, people already talked about Corona but none of us would have thought that it would have such a tremendous impact on our lives and the economy. The year 2020 will always be associated with the Coronavirus. The effect on the worldwide economy is currently difficult to predict and will most probably be felt for many years.

We had started the year very optimistically and welcomed our CEO of the Association of German Chambers (DIHK), Dr. Martin Wansleben, in February in Riyadh and Jeddah, showing him positive the developments Saudi is undergoing. We also planned to cover in this issue these tremendous changes, the development of the Tourism sector, social developments as well as the diversification of the industry through the support of megaprojects.

Corona seems to have overshadowed all these topics. However, we still hope to show you, despite current developments, the change in the kingdom, which we believe will continue its path.

Next to the context of the articles of the sector transformation, we have added several articles on relevant legal developments as well as some experiences of working in the crisis.

Please be informed that we will not be able to distribute hard copies of this edition as the mail shipment, printing companies and, as you know social events are affected by the COVID-19 situation.

We hope that for this time you will enjoy the digital version of the GSBM and will also be sharing it with your network.

The whole GESALO Team and I would like to wish you Ramadan Kareem. May this holy month bless you and your family with peace and happiness.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dalia Samra-Rohte

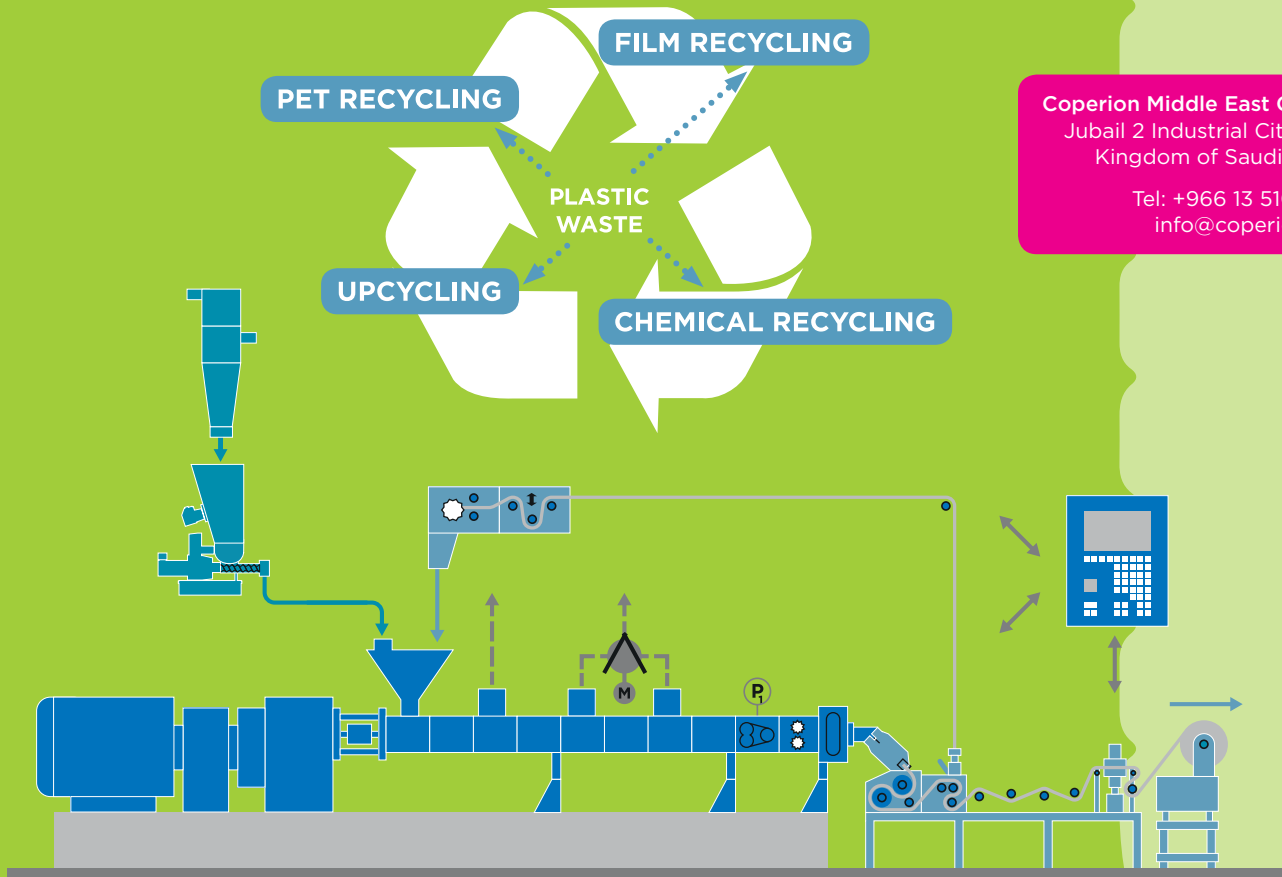


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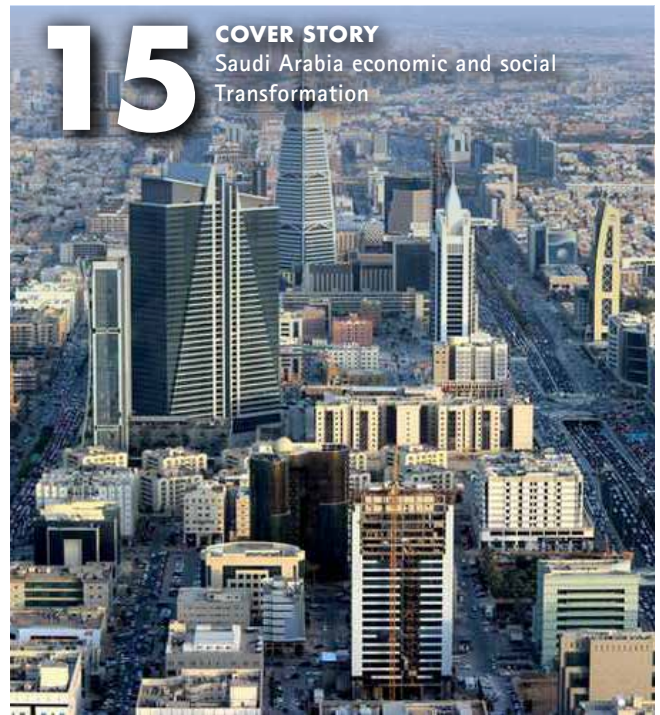
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20 TOP STORIES

Insights from the Saudi youngsters Cosmicat, DJ DesertFish, and Lama Al Fozan. They shared their professional journey, their current projects, and their visions with us.

SAUDI ARABIA PREPARED FOR THE INCREASING E-COMMERCE MARKET

The Corona crisis is accelerating rapidly digitalization around the globe. This will also have an impact on various business sectors, one of them will be e-commerce.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Within the last months companies like Amazon have increased their turnover and will employ more staff as an effect of the crisis.

Saudi Arabia has been prepared for these developments already since 2019, when passing a new E-Commerce law which came into effect at the end of 2019.

In February 2020, Saudi Minister of Commerce Majid Al-Qasabi stated that e-commerce in Saudi Arabia represented SR80 billion (\$21.3 billion) in services and products, with the Kingdom boasting over 45,000 shops and e-commerce platforms.

The e-commerce law was aiming to increase the online retail contribution to the national economy, which is in line with Saudi Vision 2030 to stimulate and boost e-commerce activities in the Kingdom.

This is a first of its kind in the Kingdom to regulate the relationship between consumers and those e-commerce practitioners who do not have a commercial registration. In particular, this provides a legal basis for female entrepreneurs (operating from home) to expand their business in a legal way and participate in the national transformation. With the introduction of the new law, small businesses and individuals selling online will have the opportunity to register with the new E-Shops Authentication Authority.

On the same time, the Law focuses on customer-protection related considerations. It applies not only to e-commerce service providers who are merchants/traders registered in the Saudi Commercial Register, but also to other e-commerce practition-

ers – both in the Kingdom and elsewhere – who are not registered in the local Commercial Register. Specifically, e-commerce practitioners who are located outside the Kingdom, but who offer goods and services to customers based in the Kingdom, are subject to this Law.

A. HISTORICALLY

E-commerce is an open market, 24 hours a day, providing time and effort to the shopper to access all goods and services with various options in a transparent and competitive environment.

There have been some unscrupulous e-commerce providers operating in the Saudi market and this law is welcomed as means to ensure that e-commerce providers do not escape the regulation they would face if operating physical stores. This should increase consumer confidence and provide protection against fraudulent operators and deceptive advertisers who often target ordinary customers.

B. BASIC FEATURES OF THE NEW LAW

- The Law sets-out minimum details that an e-store must display to customers. It requires e-commerce service providers to provide customers with clear contractual terms and specifies minimum information that must be included. It also sets-out minimum requirements for invoices.
- The Law also enhances the role of department store registries and digital platforms that act as intermediaries between the service provider and the online shopper.

- According to the new Law, the right of the consumer to return the product or service shall be within seven days in the event of not using or benefitting from it except for certain circumstances specified in the law.
- It gives the consumer the right to cancel the purchasing process if the service provider delayed delivery for more than 15 days.
- The Law regulates the electronic advertising market to protect consumers from infringing or misleading advertisement.
- The Law provides that digital advertising by e-commerce service providers constitutes supplementary terms to the contract that are binding on the parties. It will be interesting to see what this means in practice.
- The Law specifies two general scenarios in which customers have a right to terminate an e-commerce contract. These can be understood broadly as a 'cooling off period' right to terminate; and a right to terminate in the event of a delay in delivery of the goods or services.
- The Law contains general obligations with regard to the privacy of customer data.
- E-commerce operators making goods and services available to customers in the Kingdom should prepare to review their customer terms and conditions and policies to ensure that they fit within the expectations set out in the Law.
- The Law stipulates the formation of one or more committees to consider violations of the provisions of the Law or its executive regulations and punish the violator with one or more of the following penalties: warning; stopping the activity temporarily or permanently; blocking the Internet service partially or completely; and slapping fines amounting up to SR1 million.

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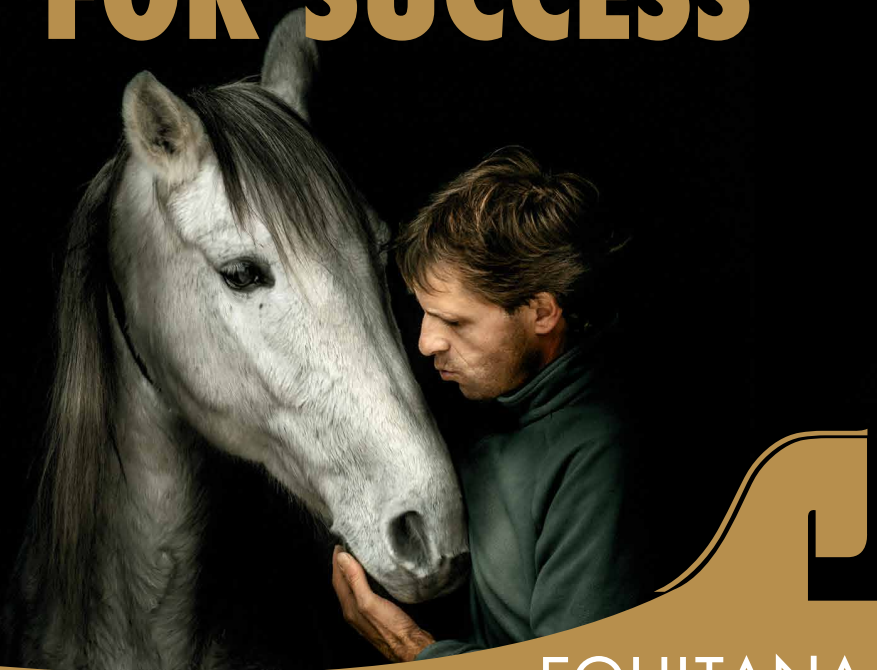
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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BUSINESSES IN KSA

The outbreak of COVID-19 has severely impacted the commercial and labor relations of the businesses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ("KSA").

This article will analyze the COVID-19's impact on commercial and employment contracts and how this impact can be mitigated through Force Majeure ("FM") clauses.

1. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

COVID-19 is having multiple effects on commercial relations. Its negative impact on the global economy is becoming increasingly apparent: supply chains are being disturbed as the flow of goods is restricted due to logistical challenges. The measures taken by the KSA government to curb the spread of the viral outbreak in the Kingdom has curtailed business activities drastically. In the present scenario many businesses are unsure about how to fulfil their contractual obligations.

2. EFFECT OF FM CLAUSES ON CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Islamic jurisprudence (Shari'a) forms the basis of the KSA legal system which recognizes the freedom of the parties to contract to the extent it does not contra-

vene Shari'a law. Accordingly, FM clauses are recognized and enforced by KSA courts. Many contracts applied in KSA contain such FM clauses.

Shari'a being a divine law is familiar with the concept of FM, i.e. acts of God. Therefore, Shari'a law recognizes multiple scenarios that are beyond the control of parties. However, the question remains whether and to what extent COVID-19 will be covered as an act beyond

the control of parties? In KSA, it is largely the judge who holds the final authority on interpretation of the contracts and applicable laws. Hence, FM clauses containing epidemics or pandemics as a FM event are more likely to compel the judge to suspend the obligation on a FM basis. However, contracts containing standard FM clauses without mentioning epidemics or pandemics are less likely to lead to a desired result.

3. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LABOUR RELATIONS

Due to restricted freedom of movement and closure of businesses in the Kingdom, employers are forced to reconsider their employment relationships to cope with the weakening economic conditions. Businesses are considering laying off employees to cut their costs.

Under the Saudi Labor Law ("LL"), an employer's right to lay off an employee due to COVID-19 is not unfettered neither can employers unilaterally send their employees on unpaid leave. Article 109 of the LL allows an employer to determine employee's annual leave period that too after a 30 days' notice. Recent regulation now gives a more elaborate handrail to rights and obligations in employment situations under current circumstances.

Employers may only finally use the FM provisions contained in the LL to terminate as per Art. 74 of LL. However, KSA Courts have handled the term of FM restrictively in the past.

4. CONCLUSION

In present circumstances, to mitigate the drawbacks of the current COVID-19 crisis, businesses are advised to review and amend their existing commercial and labor contracts. New contracts should be carefully drafted, accordingly.

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CLAIMS AGAINST THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT

Faster than many others did the Saudi Arabian government react to the Coronavirus pandemic by imposing both social distancing and economic support measures.

The economic measures so far include a SR 50 billion financing support program for SMEs, SR 9 billion of employment subsidies for Saudi employees, as well as the postponement of deadlines and the waiving of fines.

Despite these measures, the survival of many private sector companies will depend on how fast they will be able to collect outstanding amounts once the social distancing measures will be lifted and the courts operating again. Especially those working on large governmental projects are now wondering what their chances of success are to enforce their claims. Contrary to common belief, these chances are actually good.

Saudi Arabia has an independent administrative judiciary – the Board of Grievances. Established in 1954 as a division of the Council of Ministers, it became independent one year later and was transformed into a judicial body in 1982. The judicial reform of 2007 then developed it into a fully-fledged three-tier judiciary (courts – appeal courts – supreme court) and a new administrative procedure law was adopted in 2013. The independence of the administrative courts is one of the strongest expressions of the independence of the Saudi Arabian judiciary itself, as enshrined in article 46 of the Constitution.

Remarkably, none of the other GCC states has gone that far in guaranteeing the judicial review of administrative decisions. Only Oman has put in place an independent administrative judiciary (but without supreme court) whereas in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and in Qatar, specialized first-instance circuits handle administrative cases (with no specialization at the appeal and supreme court levels). No administrative courts at all exist in Bahrain, Kuwait and in the Emirate of Dubai.

The Saudi Board of Grievances Law 2007 grants the administrative court jurisdiction over all disputes (including matters of tort and disciplinary cases) involving the Saudi Arabian government and its sub-divisions as well as their administrative decisions and all cases related to contracts to which the government and its agencies are a party (article 13 of the Law).

Article 14 of the Law expressly prohibits the administrative court from ruling on acts of sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Board of Grievances has often decided that in reverse conclusion, it can set aside Royal decrees if they have been passed by the King in his capacity as head of the administration and not Head of the State. This theory has been applied in several precedents, even though some counterexamples show that it is not yet vested case law.

This is important information for contractors who sometimes battle with either tender results or the assessment of their financial claims being validated by Royal decree. The majority of administrative judges indeed consider that such Royal decisions may be invalidated.

Furthermore, since the coming into force of Saudi Arabia's new government procurement law, there is now an alternative to referring to the Board of Grievances, as the new law authorizes arbitration as a means of dispute settlement, provided the Minister of Finance agrees. Whereas it is still too early to say how easy or difficult it will be to obtain the ministerial consent, it is certain that the new rule stands in contrast to the old situation, which required the King to personally authorize the arbitration clause – which hardly ever happened in the past.

Finally, as the Kingdom is a member of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), an ICSID arbitration may be another way to enforce claims against the Saudi Arabian government. Several successful arbitration cases have been brought against governments in the GCC and one ICSID case against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently pending.

The peak of the Covid-19 crisis will be reached in a few weeks. Yet, an important wave of claim enforcement might then lie straight ahead of us!

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KSA TAX RELIEF MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- Temporary Extensions and Suspensions -

The Covid-19 Virus has hit the world unexpectedly and has had an immediate impact on the world economy. Both – private and public sectors – had to take actions such as implementing home office in order to limit the spread of Covid-19. These measures do have a direct impact on the capacity of businesses to comply with the tax deadlines outlined in the tax framework in these days as a failure to maintain the deadlines – in general – would lead to a financial penalty along with further penalties.

The Saudi Arabian General Authority of Zakat and Tax (GAZT) realized these challenges for businesses and announced the introduction of certain tax relief measures in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on March 20th accordingly. The measures in general comprise tax reliefs and extension of tax filing- and payment deadlines as summarized:

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ZAKAT AND TAX RETURNS filing deadline for the financial year 2019 has been extended by 3 months to 30 July 2020.

VAT RETURNS

The monthly VAT returns filing deadlines for February till May 2020 have been extended by 3 months as shown in the following overview:

- February 2020 » New deadline: 30 June 2020
- March 2020 » New deadline: 31 July 2020
- April 2020 » New deadline: 31 August 2020
- May 2020 » New deadline: 30 September 2020

The quarterly VAT returns filing deadline for the 1st Quarter of the year 2020 has been extended to 31 July 2020.

WITHHOLDING TAX RETURNS filing deadlines for March till May 2020 have been extended by 3 months as shown in the following overview:

- March 2020 » New deadline: 10 July 2020
- April 2020 » New deadline: 10 August 2020
- May 2020 » New deadline: 10 September 2020

EXCISE TAX RETURNS filing deadlines for March and April 2020 have been extended as shown in the following overview:

- March 2020 » New deadline: 15 August 2020
- April 2020 » New deadline: 15 August 2020

CUSTOMS DUTIES collection on imported goods against submission of bank guarantees has been postponed for a period of 30 days each for the next three months.

PAYMENT, FINES AND ENFORCEMENT

- Requests for payments by instalments will be approved without any down payment.
- Requested tax refund payments will be processed faster.
- Fines for non-payments or delayed payment of taxes that are suspended will not apply.
- Fines for late payment of instalments have been suspended until 30 June 2020.
- Fines for non-cooperation of taxpayers have been suspended until 30 June 2020.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW SAUDI COMPETITION LAW

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The new Saudi competition law potentially requires a filing up to 90 days prior to mergers or restructurings involving annual turnover in excess of \$26.6 million. Additional restrictions apply to a range of potentially anti-competitive behaviours.

A new competition regime came into force in Saudi Arabia on 23 September 2019, significantly expanding the ambit of the Saudi General Authority of Competition (GAC).

Entities operating in the country should familiarize themselves with at least certain key principles in order to avoid potential inadvertent breaches. This is particularly important since GAC now has discretion to impose flexible penalties, including unwinding transactions and imposing fines of up to 10% of turnover.

An early concern among practitioners related to a number of ambiguities in the new law. GAC issued guidelines in April 2020 in response. Although certainly helpful, these have not fully resolved the uncertainties.

MERGER FILING NOTIFICATIONS

The competition law requires any entity involved in an “economic concentration” with turnover in excess of 26.6 million US Dollars per year to make a merger filing notification to GAC up to 90 days prior to the completion date. Based on experience to date, merger approval will typically be issued in a few days.

“Economic concentration” is defined extremely broadly, capturing any economic transaction (even a single share sale, or an immaterial asset transfer) involving Saudi Arabia. There is no de minimis threshold or “change in quality of control” style test. GAC has advised us informally to impose a common sense materiality threshold, but this remains challenging absent formal guidance. GAC has also in one case waived the filing obligation in relation to an international transaction where direct Saudi shareholdings remained unchanged.

The new guidelines appear to suggest turnover should be calculated on a global basis for each of the participating entities (i.e. the seller, acquirer and target, the resulting group and shareholders). GAC currently considers it irrelevant whether or not the transaction participants have any degree of business overlap.

Going forwards, we therefore expect a far greater volume of merger filings to be required than was the case under the old law, and particularly so with multi-jurisdictional transactions. Advice should be sought at an early stage.

ANTI-COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The new law also imposes general restrictions on anti-competitive behaviours, including horizontal and vertical price fixing, cartel activity and monopoly abuse. These restrictions generally apply to all entities operating in the country, with more significant restrictions (including anti-dumping restrictions) on entities that are in a dominant position (defined as a market share of 40% or more, or an ability to otherwise control the relevant market). Interestingly, Saudi government authorities are no longer exempt from the competition law except in certain limited circumstances.

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JOINT VENTURE STRUCTURING IN SAUDI ARABIA

Strategies and legal necessities when setting-up
joint ventures in the Kingdom

As in other jurisdictions, the duration and complexity of the projects or operations for which joint ventures are created will significantly influence their structure. Unincorporated joint ventures – cooperation arrangements that do not include a joint corporate entity – are typically used for short-term engagements. Unincorporated joint ventures provide more flexibility and can be dissolved rather easily and establish a comparatively loose relationship between its partners. For long-term engagements, the closer relationship between the parties and independent management and operational structure established by an equity joint venture – thus joint ventures including a joint corporate entity – may be more appropriate.

PARTICULARS OF SAUDI ARABIAN LAW

In addition, certain particularities specific to Saudi Arabian law require consideration when structuring a joint venture in the Kingdom. For instance, because of the primacy of Islamic law, Saudi Arabian entities may not procure conventional interest-bearing loans, unless specific authorization to do so has been given by their shareholders in the form required under Saudi Arabian law. Furthermore, owing to the rudimentary protection of intellectual property under Saudi Arabian law, treatment and protection of IP rights and know-how should be addressed when structuring joint ventures. IP rights should not be transferred to a local Saudi Arabian entity. Necessary IP should be made available to the

local entity through licensing agreements. In addition, since enforcement of claims is still rather time consuming and costly in Saudi Arabia, it may be advisable to manage the profits generated by the joint venture entity to secure shareholder interests in the commercial venture.

CONTRACTUAL STRUCTURE

The constitutive agreement of a corporate entity established in Saudi Arabia – typically referred to as the articles or memorandum of association – have to be legalized by a notary public in the Kingdom and filed with the competent authorities. From a legal point of view, the parties are free to define the terms of these articles or memoranda as they see fit, provided that they meet the requirements of Saudi Arabian law, first and foremost those of the Companies Law. Still, the authorities tend to reject articles that deviate substantially from the standard articles typically utilized without legal grounds. Furthermore, the official articles cannot be made subject to foreign law or include an arbitration clause. Therefore, a separate joint venture agreement is typically concluded that governs the internal relationship among the joint venture parties.

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NOLTE KSA

Showroom opening.

Inauguration
celebration in Riyadh.

With a big celebration Nolte Küchen opened their largest showroom in the Middle East located in Riyadh.

The inauguration took place on the 12th of February 2020 under presence of the German Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - H.E. Jörg Ranau, Chairman of the Al Mazro Group, Mr. Abdulsalam Al Mazro and the Nolte Regional Managing Director, Mr. Selba Kumar Rajulu.

Nolte operates a competence center/subsidiary in Dubai which was established in 2011 to handle the company's business expansion in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

The first showroom in Saudi Arabia was opened in 2009 and has since grown to operate 8 showrooms in different cities around the country and in total 14 showrooms in the Middle East.

Nolte Küchen is the flagship brand of the Nolte Group and was founded in 1958 in Löhne Germany with a 100,000 sqm production facility in Melle.

Today, they produce 900 kitchens every day and export to over 70 countries worldwide.



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TRANSFORMING A CITY & THE LIVES OF MILLIONS

Saudi Arabia is investing in four major projects worth US\$23 billion that will transform and enhance the lives of 7 million residents of its capital Riyadh.

The city of Riyadh has embarked on an ambitious program of urban planning and civil engineering announced by the government worth over US\$23 billion that will transform the capital with four major projects into one of the most livable cities in the world.

King Salman Park will be the largest city park in the world, covering an area of 13.4km², four times the area of Central Park in New York. Sports Boulevard will be a state-of-the-art new health and wellness destination in the heart of the city, providing a network of cycle routes and adding an impressive 135km of professional cycling track. Green Riyadh is a citywide greening initiative which includes the planting of 7.5 million trees. The project will help lower the temperature of the city by 2°C and provide welcome shade, allowing residents to walk and exercise outside. Finally, Riyadh Art will establish the city as 'a gallery

without walls' through a world-class interactive public arts programme. The project will curate 1,000 pieces of art through world-class art programmes and host an annual art festival.

These four transformative projects, managed by the Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) (formally known as Riyadh Development Authority), complement the Saudi Vision 2030 'Quality of Life' Program and are aligned with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, to create sustainable cities and communities, while driving urgent action against climate change.

In addition, these projects will deliver huge social, economic and environmental benefits to the city. Many jobs will be created: construction of King Salman Park alone will generate around 50,000 jobs to completion, and then thousands more service jobs ongoing. Tourism will flourish in a city that will become a destination of choice, not only for business but also

for leisure. And families will thrive with improved mobility, a better environment, and greater opportunities to experience art and culture.

A spokesperson for the RCRC said: "Life is changing for the residents of Riyadh. In line with government reforms in education, healthcare and tourism, we are pushing forward with the diversification and development plans for the city. The goals of Vision 2030 are coming to fruition and massive infrastructure projects such as these will have significant positive implications for our social tapestry and cultural wellbeing."

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Green Riyadh.



Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

KSA: ECONOMIC & SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is undergoing a tremendous transformation. The opportunities related to these developments are remarkable and resulting in numerous business opportunities for German companies.

One of the milestones in the process is the entertainment and tourism sector. Two of the major projects are the Red Sea Development Project and Qiddiya. The Red Sea Project is focusing on investments in the hospitality sector, targeting foreign tourists and investors worldwide. The project is going to be built on a 34,000 km² area directly by the Red Sea – opposite the Egyptian coast.

Qiddiya, located 40 km outside Riyadh, is designed to primarily target residents from Riyadh to enjoy weekend entertainment. The project offers entertainment parks and 300 different activities ranging from sports to culture. It also targets to keep some of the 30 Bn USD spent yearly by Saudi citizens in foreign countries within the Kingdom.

Both projects not only offer significant investment and project opportunities but also serve as central pillars in the societal transformation in the Kingdom, as they target an industry segment that has been banned for many decades. The transformation and opening of the Kingdom have not yet received the deserved attention in the Western world.

The Kingdom introduced a tourist visa last September which made it much more accessible for foreign travelers to explore an amazing and culturally rich country. The increasing rights of women were very often limited to the perception that they were now allowed to drive. However, the role of women, especially in the business environment has changed tremendously over the last two years. One finds women represented on all different levels

in the private or government institutions. Bringing the women workforce into play, the Kingdom is also leveraging continuous investments and a very strong focus on high-quality education in the past decades. The engagement of female business leaders, entrepreneurs, and workforce will diversify decision-making and make Saudi Arabia an overall more attractive place to work.

The transformation drives more innovation into the economic diversification and leads to the departure from traditional business models.

One focus area is the field of renewable energy with current and upcoming tenders. Besides solar and energy efficiency, hydrogen is one of the hot topics discussed. NEOM, another mega-project of the Saudi Vision 2030, aims to set up a circular carbon economy. The project also hosts research projects as part of their innovation bay on green hydrogen.

The mega-projects are important lighthouse projects for the further transformation process within the Saudi Vision 2030. We are confident to witness the transformation of a country that offers many business opportunities but also numerous (unexpected and undiscovered) tourist attractions and very friendly and welcoming people.

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DR. WANSLEBEN DISCOVERS THE NEW SAUDI ARABIA

An insight into the Saudi economic transformation

From left to right: S. Ayed Al-Ayed, H. Ziegeler, M. Yousuf Naghi, Dr. Samra-Rohte, Dr. Wansleben, Eng. Mohammed Hashem, K. Al Juffali, and D. Hasan Al-Nahdi

The Transformation of Saudi Arabia was in the focus of the visit of Dr. Martin Wansleben, CEO of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, beginning of February to the Kingdom. Meetings with high ranking officials, startups as well as the visit of one of the mega projects, Qiddiya, portrayed Saudi Arabia in a new light, showing the first fruitful steps of the Vision 2030.

The tour started in Jeddah, where Dr. Wansleben inaugurated the German Desk inside the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Commerce together with the Delegate of the German Industry and Commerce for Saudi Arabia, Dr. Dalia Samra-Rohte, the German Consul General in Jeddah, Holger Ziegeler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jeddah Chamber, Mohammed bin Yusuf Naghi, the Secretary-General of the Jeddah Chamber, Eng. Imad bin Muhammad Hashem, and a number of representatives of the Saudi-German business community.

Dr. Wansleben was accompanied by Philipp Andree, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department.

The day in Jeddah was concluded with a luncheon upon invitation of Khalid Al Juffali, Chairman, E.A. Juffali and Brothers, at his house together with representatives of the German business community. The luncheon was an excellent environment to exchange information and get an insight into the business opportunities the Western province is offering.

We would like to thank Mr. Juffali for his support to make this visit to Jeddah such a success. "The German Desk in Jeddah will play a major role in exploring further in-

vestment opportunities in the Western Province and cater to the Jeddah family businesses as well as focus on the logistic and tourism sector in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030," said Dr. Samra-Rohte, Delegate of German Industry and Commerce for Saudi Arabia.

During a roundtable discussion with young entrepreneurs from the start-up scene, Dr. Wansleben engaged in a discussion with impressive young and motivated Saudi generation and praised the Saudi startup scene as well as the movements the female empowerment.

Meeting the team was also on the agenda. During his visit to the GESALO Office Dr. Wansleben congratulated our senior employees for their work

He expressed his appreciation for such long-standing and loyal support of the GESALO Office and thus the German-Saudi economic relationship.

A roundtable discussion with representatives of the industry, meetings with the Council of Saudi Chambers and SAGIA gave him a good insight into the latest developments in Riyadh.

The visit to the experience center of Qiddiya concluded the trip and gave an insight into the social and economic transformation the country is undergoing.

CONTACT

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FIRST STOP IN JEDDAH



Left: Lunch with Mr. Khalid Juffali.

Below: Meeting with the local Startups.



Inauguration at the JCCI premises.



From left: Mr. Faisal Nalpurakkal (25 years), Mr. Omar Hamza (25 years), and Mr. Mohammed Faleel (33 years).



Left: Council of Saudi Chambers

Below and right:
Visiting the Giga
Project Qiddiya.



From Left: S. Gade (Qiddiya), Dr.
Wansleben (DIHK), P. Andree (DIHK).



**Left, right
and below:**
End of the
visit with
sunset, Ar-
abic coffee
and dates.



NEW TUNES FROM THE KINGDOM

The musical offspring of the Kingdom are optimistic about the gradual cultural opening of their country.

The MDL Beast, the largest arts, culture, and music festival last December in Riyadh represented a passion that had lived in the hearts of the Saudi youth long before the Jeddah and Riyadh Seasons. The Saudi Arabian electronic dance music scene may still be developing, but it is developing inexorably, with highly motivated and talented DJs ready to show the world that they are ready to compete on a global scale. These confident and talented artists had to stand up against conservative social norms as well as prejudices within their home country as well as internationally.

But events like the MDL Beast in Riyadh (part of the „Riyadh Season“) with over 160,000 spectators over the 3-days festival or the White Oasis concert 2018 at the King Abdullah Economic City in Jeddah make clear how many followers and supporters the Music Scene enjoys in the Kingdom. The successful runs last year of the Riyadh Season and Diriyah Season are one of the Kingdom's in-

itiatives to develop the entertainment and sports sector in line with Vision 2030. Other events featured in Diriyah Season include the Diriyah Equestrian Festival, the “Clash on the Dunes” boxing match between heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua and Brian Ruiz Jr, and the Diriyah E-Prix 2019, the equivalent of Formula One for electric cars.

Several Music events and concerts have also taken place in the Kingdom, with artists ranging from Usher to K-pop band BTS performing in sold out venues in the capital. GESALO presents some Saudi talents who have stirred up the music scene in the Kingdom and whose names we should all remember.

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COSMICAT - THE QUEEN OF TURN TABLES

The 28-year-old Cosmicat from Jeddah is one of the few female DJs in Saudi Arabia.

Cosmicat, the confident and talented DJ had to fight hard against conservative social norms and patriarchy to follow her passion and establish herself in the so far male-dominated music industry.

Tell us about your experiences, how did you start, where are you now?

I always had an interest in music for as long as I remember but honestly, I did not expect to ever do this professionally. It started when I was younger: I used to collect cassettes and CDs and my obsession with music did lead to a huge personal music library. I have always been drawn to sound and beats. I tried covering the songs, I loved to play the piano as a kid, and I used to write songs as a teenager. Now, I decided to escape my career as a dentist for a while to pursue my dream in music as a DJ and a producer.

What were the biggest obstacles and surprises on your way?

One of the biggest obstacles I faced when I was first coming up is not being taken seriously by the men who dominate this industry. I believe this is a blessing in disguise as it made me work twice as hard to prove myself! I will keep pushing full force until my music is known worldwide.

The first few times I had to perform in public (before all the major music festivals took place in Saudi) I



Cosmicat.

was very concerned about how the audience will perceive me, it's different here in Saudi because people tend to be very conservative. But every time I'm up on the stage I can feel the amazing love and support which shows me that we are no longer living in a closed-off environment and people are more and more open to changes.

What do you expect from the future?

Honestly, I don't know! What I hope and is to see my country becoming the heart of arts and culture in the Middle East in the next few years. We have lots of talents in Saudi Arabia who been waiting for so long to explode with self-expression and to present themselves to the world. In regards of myself: I will keep working hard and put my focus on creating music and support my community - especially women.

How was your collaboration with German artists?

It was one of the most exciting experiences I had, on my first gig in 2018

I got to play next to three amazing women: female DJs Charlotte Spiegel, Piloka and Gudrun Gut.

Each of them had her own unique sound and I enjoyed them all. They all gave me their CDs, which I will treasure forever. In 2019 I shared the stage with Spinnzinn and Angie Taylor, another impressive experience in my carrier. They blew my mind with their sound as I always loved Techno more than anything else.

Who were your biggest supporters and what do you love about the Kingdom?

Everyone in the music & art community has shown me support in their own way and I appreciate each one very much. What I love the most about Saudi Arabia is the diversity. There are so many subcultures within our culture, and everyone are constantly thriving not to just keep up with the world but to #1 in everything.

KSA WEST COAST DJ DESERTF!SH

The multi-instrumental artist and producer Nasser Alshemimry shares his insights about his career and experience.

Representing his Najdi roots and life on the West Coast of Saudi Arabia, Nasser identifies himself with the Electronic Music scene in the Kingdom. He is affiliated with Typ3 Records based out of Berlin and Miami.

Nasser, alias DesertF!sh, inspired his audience at festivals like the Jeddah Season and the MDL Beast Festival in Riyadh. In collaboration with the German consulate in Jeddah, he also initiated the first public Techno party in the Kingdom.

DESERTF!SH

After having spent a few years in Miami, where I was first introduced to electronic music while studying, I came back to Saudi Arabia in 2014 to work for our family business in the Food and Beverage industry. But as the Kingdom started to initiate the development of the entertainment sector, I believed it could be possible to pursue my musical and art dreams. Encouraged by my parents, in 2016, I decided to fully focus on my music career.

Now I found some success in my passion, even though the COVID-19 crisis has taken a toll on our plans for 2020. It was not all that easy. The biggest obstacles I faced, were mainly related to industry standards. Entertainment, as a new sector in Saudi, still has no place for the niche services that I provide. Film scoring, sound design, and sound installations, are just a few examples. Integrating these services into the mainstream industry seems to be very difficult.

To overcome these obstacles, I continue to be persistent and pursue my passions and offer my services regardless, with the idea of a butterfly effect to ripple into future opportunities. I enjoy the support of my family, my friends and my local community. I am also thankful for the support of the German Consul General in Jeddah, Mr. Holger Ziegeler. His belief in our community is encouraging and quite inspirational.

Besides the German artists whom I met during their visits to Saudi Arabia, I also had the pleasure of participating in a trip to Germany with the Saudi Art Council. The

cooperation with German artists was wonderful. Through the banner of cultural exchange, we have succeeded in raising the Saudi music scene and offering people a unique experience of a handshake between two nations - celebrating together and exploring a wonderful musical world.

I think this cooperation has created an effective link between the German diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia and the locals. The result has been a real interaction between the Saudi and German representatives, giving the citizen an idea of foreign culture and customs within the Kingdom. I am grateful for the German support system for giving us a platform to express ourselves. I would like the international readers to know, that Saudi Arabia is our home and we want to present it to the world in its true colours, without media influence or bias and all politics aside. We are the citizens of this country and we have stories to tell and experiences to share.

I love the opportunities that are available in Saudi Arabia and I am very proud of my government and what they stand for. Beside music, Saudi Arabia has to offer so much. The beauty of the country as well as the great variety of delicious foods. I enjoy the traditional cuisine from the Najd and Hijaz area very much.

My wish for the future is that we can establish an entertainment society in Saudi Arabia, that respects their local artists and media composers and will give them the recognition they deserve. It would be great if we all can support local talents rather than to only rely on foreign artists.



Photo: DesertFish (1)

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LAMA AL FOZAN - MANAGER & ATHLETE

In an interview conducted by our colleague Dorian Lötzer, Lama Al Fozan shared some insight to her life, her work, and visions.

Lama Al Fozan did her Master's in International Affairs and Diplomacy, before working for SAGIA for 8 years. She then moved to Riyadh to work for the King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD), where she now leads the partnership department. She also focuses on humanitarian issues through the work of her NGO "Talga", focusing on finding ways to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Lama is also part of the Saudi national fencing team and member of the kingdom's first Athlete's Commission, where she works to represent athletes in the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee.

We at GESALO are very happy to have Dr. Samra-Rohte as the first female German delegate to Saudi Arabia, who is being welcomed with open arms everywhere she goes. In our work, we try to put a focus on hearing women's voices in Saudi Arabia. What insights have you gained in the development of female participation in the Kingdom?

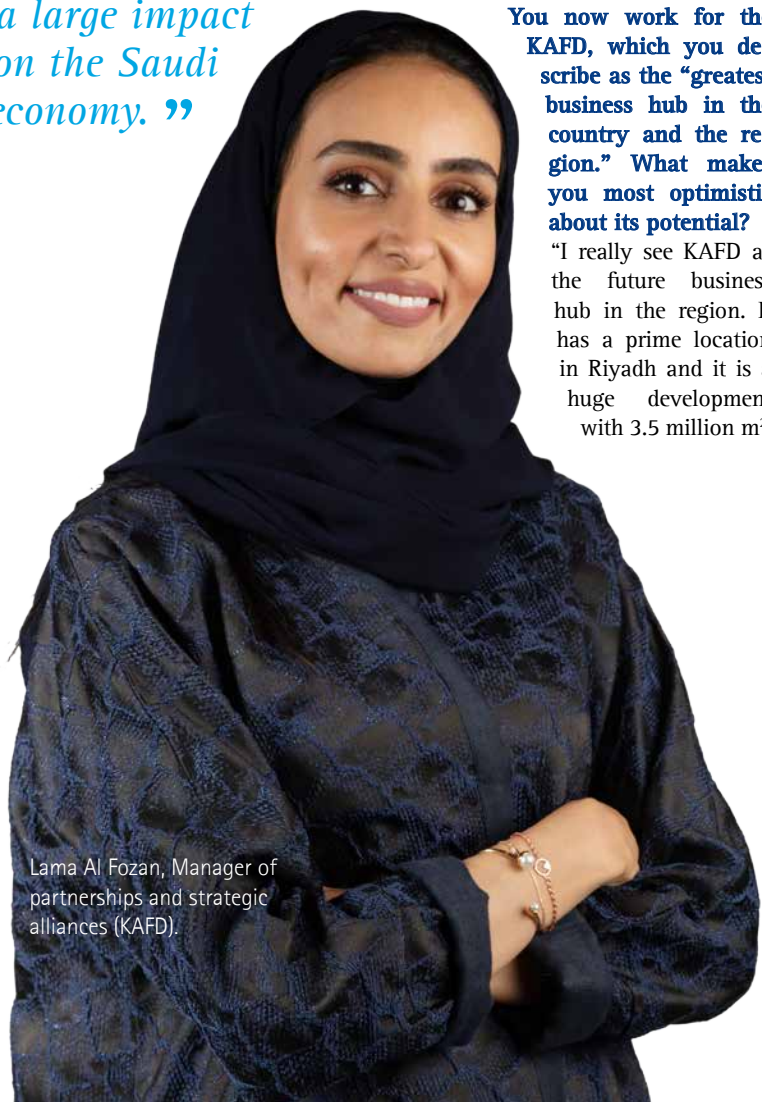
"The main driver of women's empowerment in Saudi Arabia is the Vision 2030, which aims to increase female participation in the Kingdom from 22 to 30%. KAFD is one of the biggest business districts in the region and the world and there is a strong focus on supporting the Saudi workforce. Here,

"The projects we work on are very big and KAFD will have a large impact on the Saudi economy."

we have 80% Saudization, of which 32% are women and we have no glass ceiling. Today, you can see amazing examples of Saudi female CEOs, lawyers, doctors etc. This makes me a true believer of Vision 2030. In my opinion, the future for Saudi females is extremely bright and I am very optimistic."

You now work for the KAFD, which you describe as the "greatest business hub in the country and the region." What makes you most optimistic about its potential?

"I really see KAFD as the future business hub in the region. It has a prime location in Riyadh and it is a huge development with 3.5 million m².



Lama Al Fozan, Manager of partnerships and strategic alliances (KAFD).



Lama's second passion: fencing.

There are many opportunities to work and invest and I'm really proud to work even on a small scale to support such a huge project. It is a dream come true and I am sure KAFD will be successful."

To take on this position, you had to move from the EP to Riyadh. How did you experience that move?

"It was not easy to leave my family to live in Riyadh alone but working for KAFD was a great job opportunity that I don't regret taking. I am grateful on a professional level and I learn every day from my exposure to international companies and organizations. The projects we work on are very big and KAFD will have a large impact on the Saudi economy. I have lived here for one year and I love Riyadh now. The city is full of professional, cultural, and entertainment opportunities. In the past, I was offered chances to live and work abroad, but I am now honestly sure that Riyadh is the place to be professionally and I wouldn't want to work anywhere else in the world."

Between your interest in international affairs and your work at KAFD, you are active in a variety of other projects, including the Athlete's Commission and your NGO, Talga. How do you manage all the different commitments?

"It's all about managing your time and enjoying what you do. When I do sports, I feel empowered. I know I act as a role-model so that other women from the region can look at what I do and think 'I can do this as well!' I also take pride in representing my country. I love what I do, and I believe in it. We were created for a purpose and I believe that you have to give back to your family, your country, and your society. This doesn't mean you shouldn't have fun, but you should find your purpose and give back however you can. While I am young, I want to work hard, and I especially find sports to be a good way to stay fit and give back. In the end it's about finding your passion and pursuing it."

Did you always know you wanted to work in this field?

"I didn't always know what I wanted to do. I fell a lot but navigated my way forward. This is also why I love sports – you fall often but you always must get up and try again. I knew I like people (I was always told that I am a people person) so now I work in partnerships, where I am a connection between internal and external communications. When you are young you don't know what your future is, you must try to explore different things, find your strengths, and then focus on them."

With the current health climate, people may be less inclined to visit the Kingdom in the future. However, we think KSA has huge tourism potential. What part of Saudi Arabia would you like to highlight to first time visitors?

"Saudi is a beautiful, previously 'locked' country that is only just opening its doors. There are a lot of cultural and historical sites. Its people are very kind and young – over 70% of the population are under 35! I think that especially Saudi women have been underrepresented in the international media. I am a breathing example that we are just like everyone else. Even before this generation, Saudi has had incredible women whose stories are not being told. We have a huge campus for women with Princess Noura University. Saudi is a beautiful country. Everyone should visit it once to see the people and its culture. It will change your mind."

CONTACT

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MAKHLOUF BENZAHAIA

The new Managing Director of S. A. TALKE.



Above: Makhlof Benzahia
Left: Handling of all kinds of liquid and dry chemicals and petrochemicals

You have been working for S.A. TALKE for 6 years now. How has your transition been?

Having joined S.A. TALKE as a Senior Operations Manager in October 2013 was a good decision, I found the entire team extremely welcoming and this made me feel at home from day one.

I have noticed that the team was open minded, they had an incredible ability to embrace change and adapt new ideas, these were necessary ingredients to achieve future success.

The topic on everyone's mind has been the Covid-19. How did your company handle the response?

Covid-19 is a pandemic that caught almost everyone by surprise. In these situations, it is necessary to have plans in place that can be rolled out successfully at a moment's notice. We are lucky enough to be part of an extensive global network from which we leverage knowledge and expertise.

S.A. TALKE has been well prepared for this, we were one of the first LSP's to implement a comprehensive prevention program intently and we have proudly participated in supporting the community to raise awareness and support where needed.

In your opinion, what are the biggest long-term implications of the crisis on the logistics sector in Saudi Arabia?

I believe that this crisis will change the logistics and supply chain sector in KSA and globally in mixed ways. Some players may not be able to cope with the current difficulties and those who innovate in these difficult times will survive and become stronger.

Dependency on one another has never been clearer, this complex ecosystem can only succeed when all partners are well integrated, prepared and work together as one unit. Unfortunately, this time around the global coordination has fallen short of expectation leading to catastrophic loss of lives and severely damaged economies, normality is a long road ahead and the measure of success will be determined on how well the world is prepared to manage the next crisis.

Saudi has been one of the better prepared countries, their plans seem to work in preventing an aggressive spread and a high mortality rate. However, due to dependency on oil and high globalization level the economic consequences will be deep and lasting.

For many of us, digital disruption has suddenly become a new reality. What have you learnt from the crisis? Are there any lessons you are taking into a post-coronavirus time?

Digitalization has and will always play a major part in logistics and other industries. During this crisis and due to restriction on movement, up to 90% of our supporting activities were conducted remotely, this is the first time we have been able to achieve this. Going forward I believe higher digitalization as part of business continuity management will be a priority to ensure sustainable services in all cases. I also believe this will prove to be a differentiator for success and a mean to achieve efficiency.

Many expect to see the global economy bounce back with unprecedented growth numbers after the end of the crisis. Do you share this assessment? Is the logistics sector prepared to handle a sudden increase in demand?

I believe the strong bounce-back is overstated, this crisis will leave significant damage in economies around the world. The recovery will take time and will depend largely on success of authorities to provide meaningful quantitative easing for those that are the hardest hit. The consumer is the driver of economies, as million around the world lose their jobs, I envisage supporting people financially and creating jobs will be a top priority for governments around the world.

S.A. TALKE has always been a reliable partner, we have built a certain agility to our systems to ensure we successfully respond to a surge in demand. We are ready to serve our clients and support them to become more successful.

You have been in your new position as Managing Director for 18 months now. How has your transition been? How has your experience in Saudi Arabia benefitted you in this role?

The transition to the Managing Director position has been smooth, I received amazing support from all the partners and our people which made the task much easier. Having spent many years in KSA with DHL and S.A. TALKE, I have become much more aware of the cultural diversity of teams in this region. The need to create a unique culture in the work place and the key ingredients that must exist to create successful partnerships with clients

to achieve long term business relationships that are based on trust, mutual respect and a win-win situation for all stakeholders.

How did your Master's degree in Germany lay the foundation of your career?

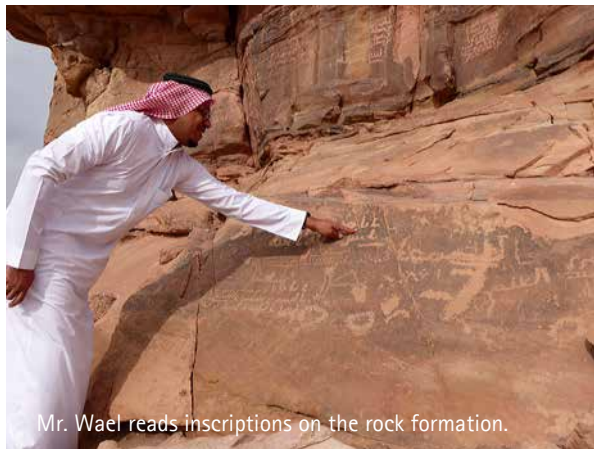
I have been fortunate enough to pursue my MBA at Ludwigshafen Institute of Applied Science. I was coached by a team of highly talented professors who gave me a strong foundation to build on. I found that many of the topics were industry relevant and current, the student mix was rich and diverse which made interacting and group work fun. I strongly recommend the program to anyone that might consider further education as it surely will add value.

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Established in 2004, S.A. TALKE offers a full range of specialized chemical logistics services in Saudi Arabia.



Mr. Wael reads inscriptions on the rock formation.

MOSES IN NEOM?

Remember the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Since the 1930s there are reports from mostly non-archaeological international “bible researchers” that Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments, is in Saudi Arabia, on top of the 2.785 m high Jebel Al-Lawz. On the internet, you can find many kinds of videos, photos, and stories about this and there is even the “proof” that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea between the Sinai Peninsula (near Nuweiba) and Saudi Arabia. I will not comment on this. What interests me in this story is the contradictory manner this topic is presented. There is fake news about how bad the local Bedouins treat visitors or that the Saudi government wants to keep this area a secret and even stranger: the government wants to destroy Jebel Al-Lawz. When recent demands came up to organize a campaign against building NEOM this subject started to catch more interest. Therefore, I decided to visit this “extremely dangerous” area to do my research. - On November 16, 2019, at 8 a.m., we start the journey from Tabuk. „It will take two full days, because one day we go south from Jebel Al-Lawz, the next day north“, Wael, my driver guide had told me before, as there is no place to stay overnight. “We have to come back to Tabuk and leave again the next day, but we will always take different roads”.

WHERE IS THE GOLDEN CALF?

The first destination is the „temple“, the place south from Jebel Al-Lawz, where the dance around the Golden Calf happened. From Tabuk, we drive south-west through the desert towards Dhuba. The area where rock formations come close to the highway is called Qushah. Here the local people like to drive their 4WD through the dunes, sur-

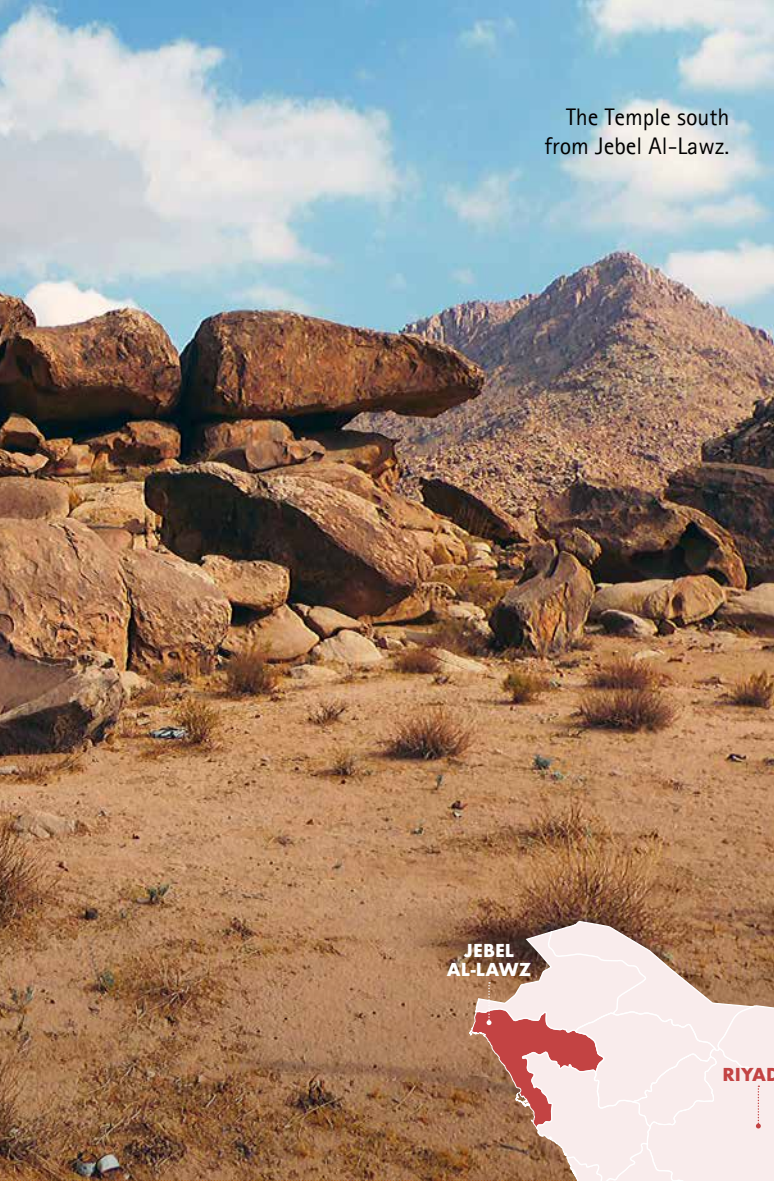
A large, rugged rock formation under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The rocks are reddish-brown and have a weathered appearance. The foreground is a dry, sandy area with some sparse vegetation.

JOURNEY TO JEBEL AL-LAWZ

Al-Bid is the region around Jebel Al-Lawz in the north-west of Tabuk province. Historians call it the “cradle of civilizations”. The city Al-Bid is the ancient Midian. What makes Al-Bid region special: it is located in the center of NEOM.

rounded by bizarre rocks. There is a sign “Bagdah” and we continue off-road until we see a big, single rock that looks like a ship: “Jebel Safina”. The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) has built a fence around it and the typical SCTH sign declares it an archaeological site. Wael opens the door and we discover marvelous over 1000-year-old inscriptions in the rocks. “I can read the name of prophets like Mohammed, Hud, Salih” he deciphers. We continue towards the village Al Sarwa that consists of a white mosque, some houses, and Bedouin tents. In the long wadi, many cisterns and signs are saying “free water”. Near an electric station, we turn right and after a while we reach the temple at 11:30. Here, SCTH has built a fence around the massive collection of big rocks with a smooth surface on top. We enter the area and discover an incredible number and variety of rock engravings showing cows with geometrical patterns. I had already seen more than 10.000-year-old rock engravings in different provinces of the Kingdom, showing all kinds of animals, but

The Temple south
from Jebel Al-Lawz.



JEBEL
AL-LAWZ

RIYADH

not too many cows and never with geometric patterns. Therefore, this was special. “In the past, there were gold diggers around, because they were expecting some gold left from the Golden Calf, but did not find anything,” says Wael. While admiring the rock art a Bedouin comes closer, he had heard our car. Abdulaziz is very friendly and tells us that he lives nearby. “American tourists were here, they wanted to see Jebel Al-Lawz, the mountain with the blacktop, where Moses had been. We call it Jebel Musa. The black color remains from the fire when God talked to Moses. For many generations, people here know the stories about Prophet Moses. The Bedouins who live here are happy about visitors and they are very welcome”. I knew about many speculations concerning “the single blacktop” of Jebel Al-Lawz, but while driving around in this granite and the volcanic environment we see many black mountaintops and black areas climbing up the mountains, caused by black stones that geologists would explain easily. Abdulaziz recommends another area for sacrificing and while driving there we discover many water reservoirs. Cow engravings richly decorate this place as well.

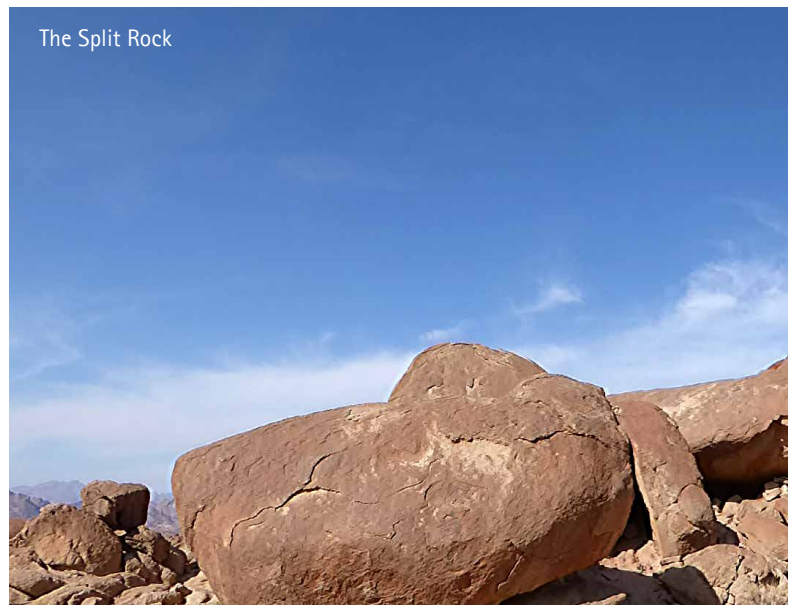
Wadi Al-Lawz, a long valley on the foot of Jebel A-Lawz is our next destination. A many kilometre long fence, built by SETH, surrounds the whole, wide area with huge stones from a quarry in a wild environment. We find the place where the fence has fallen down and entered an untouched, natural “stone sculpture park”. From here, it is possible to climb Jebel Al-Lawz, the path up



Rock engravings: cows at the temple.



From left: Abdulaziz and Wael.



The Split Rock

is clearly visible. “Not today”, says Wael, because he wants to show me another place with very old rock drawings. This one is full of human beings, lions, cows, and camels. Here we are 1.500 m high, surrounded by mountains. It is silent, there are only some goats grazing, the sun gives the mountains golden color, while we drive slowly and enjoy nature. At 15:30, we get back to the asphalt road near the white mosque, take the road through famous Wadi Hisma and pass an area with bizarre rock formations, similar to the ones around Al Ula - a huge uninhabited area, all belonging to NEOM.

THE SPLIT ROCK

Early morning the next day, we start from Tabuk north to Hallat Ammar, passing a region with several big farms. “Here you have to dig about 800 m deep to find water”, says Wael. We pass a wide area dominated by olive farms, dunes, and rocks towards a mountain chain. The road passes Wadi Sadir, famous for its red sand and rocks that look like human figures and animals. An Nadain is a place where the road passes through a massive rock formation and behind that we reach As Deita, an area that reminds me of Wadi Rum in Jordan. We leave the asphalt road, and after a short off-road drive through the red sand, we stop the car, get out of it and climb up Jebel Qatar towards a high cave. Big surprise: the cave is not very deep, but

from the rocky ceiling, water is constantly dripping into a natural pool, surrounded by green plants with tiny white blossoms. “The water never stops dripping, even during hot and dry months in summer”, says Wael. The view from here goes to the opposite side: a rocky wall that rises straight out of the sand. After that, a two-hour off-road drive is leading us to an 800 m high wadi, surrounded by bizarre mountains. What makes this wadi special is an incredible amount of green acacia trees. From the distance, a green belt seems to hover over the landscape. A few camels are grazing. At the end of the wadi lives Mohammed, a friendly Bedouin, in his big tent. “Only a few Bedouins live here, they all know Split Rock and the story about Moses who hit the rock with his stick and water came out. My grandfather has told me the story, again and again, and he told me that since generations the rock is well known. You will reach it in about 30 minutes’ time”, he tells us. We see the split rock from far away. It is a unique formation at the highest point of a mountain fully covered with granite stones. Later we discover more split rocks, but this one is by far the biggest. We climbed halfway up, and with a little bit of fantasy, we can see the waterway. We enjoy the sun shining from a blue sky, the rocky and quiet nature, and the fresh air. Driving back to Tabuk we admire the colors of the mountains in the afternoon sun: they turn from pink to red and finally dark red. Wael says: “Abdulaziz and Moham-



med had invited us for tea and lunch and only accepted my refusal because I told them that we had to go back to Tabuk. Lunch was sheep meat, I know you do not like it.”

VISIT AT SCTH

The offices of the Archaeological Research Studies of SCTH are located near the National Museum in Riyadh. I meet Ali Mohammed Al Faris. “Archaeology Researcher, Assistant Museums,” says his business card. I tell him about my visit to Al-Bid area. He tells me that Saudi Archaeologists work there since many decades and that they have done detailed and deep research in all the locations where the Bedouins refer to Moses, because it is a well-known fact that local people know their area since many generations and can be very helpful. “Saudi archaeologists dig there for 70 years and not only Saudis and other Arabs but also famous western researchers like Richard Burton, Alois Musil, and Henry Saint John Philby were there, as you can read in the books they published. Our scientific research gave the result that the archaeological findings date from the Palaeolithic period to the present day, including the Nabataeans, for example. All over the Kingdom, there are thousands of years old rock engravings and inscriptions, similar to the ones in Al-Bid. In other words, we cannot say that Jebel Al-Lawz is the mountain of Moses. In our opinion, Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, but of course,

we are open for future serious and scientific archaeological research work”. Is Jebel Al-Lawz in danger because of NEOM? “Never any archaeological site in the Kingdom will be destroyed - on the contrary: it is our duty to keep these places in good condition because they belong to our culture and history. Actually, there are many international archaeological teams doing research in Tabuk Province. They use drones and most sophisticated equipment. Even if one day they might find out that Jebel Al-Lawz is Mount Sinai, we would take care of this site, because it would be a touristic jewel”. In my imagination, I can already see a visitor center there. - Before I leave, he has a wonderful gift for me: The book “Al-Bid (History and Archaeology)”, published in 2002 by the Saudi Ministry of Education, Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, several University Professors, Researchers and Archaeologists in English and Arabic, with many photographs, maps and a detailed list of publications concerning the Jebel Al-Lawz area. The authors of the book conclude that Jebel Al-Lawz is not Mount Sinai and I can only follow that conclusion.

BARBARA SCHUMACHER is a German freelance journalist, who is specialized in the Arab world since 1994 and has published countless articles about the Arab world.

DUSSMANN SIGNS JOINT VENTURE WITH AJLAN & BROS.

The Dussmann Group has reached an important milestone in Saudi Arabia with the establishment of a joint venture at the beginning of March.



From left: Hakan Lanfredi, Executive Board member responsible for EMEA of the Dussmann Group, with Sheikh Mohammed Ajlan from the Ajlan & Bros. holding group and Sebastian Porth, Dussmann.

The joint venture partner Ajlan & Bros. is one of the most renowned families in the Kingdom. The Dussmann subsidiary in Saudi Arabia, founded in 2018 and based in Riyadh, is one of 14 in the globally active family-owned company, which is based in Berlin.

Dussmann Service offers cleaning services, technical services, security and office support for many outstanding buildings with state-of-the-art architecture in the Middle East.

The Arabian region is one of the Dussmann Group's growth markets, as it has opened itself up to professional facility management services in recent years.

With around 66,000 employees in 21 countries, the Dussmann Group offers services for everything to do with people. The largest division, Dussmann Service, provides building services, catering, security and reception services, cleaning, sterile services, commercial management and energy management from a single source.

Dussmann Technical Solutions (DTS) bundles all technical trades over the entire life cycle of facilities and buildings, from design with engineering services and planning to construction, maintenance and repair: STS with electrical engineering, DKA with refrigeration and air conditioning technology and HEBO with elevator technology. Kursana provides care and nursing for 13,600 senior citizens. In addition, the Dussmann Group operates the KulturKaufhaus in Berlin and provides company-oriented childcare with the Dussmann KulturKindergartens. In 2018, the Dussmann Group achieved total sales of 2.34 billion Euros.

CONTACT

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Executive Board member
Dussmann Stiftung & Co. KGaA
hakan.lanfredi@dussmann.de*



ajlan & bros.
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GAINING FULL TRANSPARENCY IN TIMES OF CORONA

V-LINE GROUP founded a Global Task Force.

The COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted lives, livelihoods, communities and businesses worldwide. The pandemic not only affects our daily lives until today but also has an impact on businesses and supply chains. Many companies reported supply chain disruptions in

some capacity due to coronavirus-related transportation or supply chain restrictions, and more than 80 percent

believe that their organization will experience some impact because of COVID-19 disruptions.

The V-LINE GROUP, global leader in MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Operations) supply, thus founded the

global task force “Supply Chain Transparency” at the beginning of the pandemic to minimize the risks for its customers and achieve full transparency.

We spoke with Niklas Rosocha, Process Quality Manager and Head of the task force, and Hasnain Jamil, CEO of V-LINE MIDDLE EAST, on how the COVID-19 pandemic was approached at V-LINE and which steps were taken.

Niklas, the task force was founded some weeks ago. Which were the first steps you took?

Niklas Rosocha: Our first goal was to achieve a general overview on the situation in a quick manner. We needed to sort all the information coming in and evaluate it to assess how our customers can take value out of it. Accordingly, it was clear that the task force had to consist of the key account managers globally. To gain full transparency on both our and on the customer’s side, we then decided on further measures.

Can you name some?

Niklas: I want to emphasize two main measures we took to reach the next level of transparency. After having sorted the information and having set it in relation, we were able to allocate which information was available to us and which was still missing, meaning which orders, parts and suppliers and thus which customers were affected. To obtain the missing pieces of information, e.g. of suppliers we haven’t received a message yet, we coordinated a cross-departmental group that phoned over 1000 suppliers all over the world to record the status of more than 4000 MRO items. The findings were entered into our system to create transparency along the whole supply chain for our customers. We set up a base of information and now are able to update it whenever necessary. For example, if a supplier mentioned that his business opens again on May 3, we will again phone him on that day to stay up to date.

That sounds extensive.

Niklas: At the same time, we took a measure to



Hasnain Jamil:
CEO of V-LINE
MIDDLE EAST

pass this gained transparency on to our customers: We adapted our reporting for them. Every day we systematically evaluate how the situation in our supply chain is changing. In this way, we want to identify developments as early as possible in order to be able to react quickly. We made these status reports for open positions available for all of our customers globally and included all the findings we gathered, e.g. if the goods are affected by the current situation, where they come from or if there are new delivery dates. We decided to adapt the reports we had already created before the pandemic, so the customer has as little effort as possible and can quickly scan if his orders are affected. Of course, if a part has priority, the customer can contact us, so we can take the next steps.

Hasnain Jamil: For this, and for any other problem that might occur to our customers, we shared the task force contacts with them, so they can reach us at any time. We have the vision to focus on three main aspects: Communication, Transparency and Supply Chain Reliability. As Niklas described, we are in close contact with our customers to master early bottlenecks and adopt to new lead times to minimize disruption. As a next step, we are working more closely on the reliability where we are also trying to find alternatives if necessary and introduce new products previously ordered or that are to be shipped from already closed markets.

Niklas: We also launched a news ticker on our website that we update constantly with all V-LINE related developments. Furthermore, we are looking for counter parts at our customers to contact them and find quick solutions if necessary. This could be someone who is also head of a supply chain task force or the procurement manager for example.

It looks like you are organizing and implementing a lot in all directions to keep the transparency high. Let's have a look at V-LINE itself. How do you cope with the situation?

Hasnain: We assessed the circumstances, defined our responsibilities and work towards our major stakeholders in the business. Next to our customers and shareholders, as already mentioned, these are our employees and the society. V-LINE is committed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of its employees and their families. We introduced strict guidelines, in line with the directives issued by the

government and health organizations to prevent the spread of disease.

We also took precautionary measures following the "social distancing" scenario by introducing the Work from Home setup. All employees were

equipped with the necessary tools to stay and work from home with full virtual contact. V-LINE MIDDLE EAST, e.g., is completely working from home now and we only achieved this by focusing on three major aspects: Communication, Communication and Communication. The same happened for our other locations in Germany and the US. Our employees there also work from home and we keep each other up to date with virtual meetings.

Niklas: We as V-LINE also want to take something positive out of this crisis. Upcoming tasks are assessed and coordinated by the task force. And even beyond this tough time, we want to translate learnings into our processes, so they can be more efficient and optimized, hence, we can even create more transparency to our customers when the crisis is over.

Hasnain: We as V-LINE leaders appreciate the teamwork and efforts of the employees and the task force. They work remotely with full dedication, passion and ownership exactly in line with the core values of the V-LINE GROUP and trust in being a reliable procurement service provider for the customers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Niklas Rosocha:
Process Quality
Manager
and Head of
task force
"Supply Chain
Transparency".

JANINE KATZWINKEL is the Marketing & PR
Coordinator for V-LINE EUROPE GmbH

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SOLAR ENERGY IS MOVING INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

The demand for electricity in Saudi Arabia is very large and has been rising steadily in recent years. In addition to the expansion of gas-fired power plants, several photovoltaic projects are in focus.

Saudi Arabia remains one of the largest per capita electricity consumers in the world. Electricity demand (peak load) rose by 60 percent in the last ten years until 2019 to 62.7 gigawatts (GW). A further doubling to 120 GW is expected by 2030. In addition to air conditioning in summer, the rising demand for water desalination is contributing to the sharp increase.

The price of electricity has been adjusted several in the Kingdom in recent years: On the one hand, to better cover actual generation costs (reduction of subsidies) and, on the other hand, to increase consumer awareness. In 2018, the tariffs were reduced to two classes (four in 2016): Under 6,000 kilowatt hours, the tariff is 4.80 US cents per kilowatt hour and beyond that, 8 US cents per kilo-

watt hour. Previously, end consumers using less than 2,000 kilowatt hours paid 1.31 US cents and end consumers with a consumption of 2,000 to 4,000 KWh paid 2.71 US cents. The enormous increase was mitigated by indirect subsidies, through the "Citizen's Account", to which 48 percent of citizens have access.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE NUMBER OF SOLAR PROJECTS IS CATCHING UP WITH OIL AND GAS PROJECTS

The Saudi power grid is a regional anomaly with a 60 Hz frequency, so grid integration with neighboring countries is only possible to a limited extent. There is no significant import or export of electricity. The desert state is therefore dependent on securing its demand locally. According to the MEED project database, 62 power plant projects are currently in the planning or construction phase with a total value of 122.9 billion US dollars. In terms of the number of projects, the majority is accounted for by the construction and expansion of conventional oil and gas power plants with 25 projects, as well as the construction of 25 new solar power plants. Financially, the lion's share is accounted for by the implementation of the nuclear

energy program, which is estimated at US\$70 billion.

RIYADH WANTS TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE EXPANSION OF RENEWABLE ENERGIES

The government in Riyadh is pushing the development and use of renewable energies more strongly within the framework of the National Renewable Energy Program (NREP). With the establishment of the Renewable Energy Project Development Office (REPDO) in 2017, a central point of contact for the implementation of the goals was created. Within two years, by 2019, solar projects with a total capacity of over 330 MW were built. Especially the first large-scale photovoltaic (PV) power plant in Sakaka, tendered in the IPP (independent power producer) process, shows the seriousness with which Saudi Arabia is trying to implement its plans as quickly as possible.

Photovoltaics (PV) accounts for 40 GW, wind energy for 16 GW and solar (CSP) for 2.7 GW. 30 percent of the projects are to be awarded via REPDO in a competitive bidding process, while the majority (70 percent) will be awarded directly by the Public Investment Fund (PIF). REPDO is currently in the tendering phase for NREP rounds II and III for PV projects with



a total capacity of 1.4 and 1.2 GW respectively.

In Round I, in addition to Sakaka, the 40 MW wind power plant Dumat al Jandal was also implemented using the IPP process. The 300 MW Sakaka PV power plant will be operated by the Saudi Arabian company ACWA Power for 25 years under a power purchase agreement (PPA) for 2.34 US cents per kilowatt hour – a record low at the time of award in February 2018. Similarly, the Dumat-al-Jandal wind power plant also achieved a new record price of 1.99 US cents per kilowatt hour of electricity production costs (LCOE). The US\$500 million project is being developed by a consortium of France's EDF Renewables and is scheduled to go online in 2022.

NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM IS A CENTRAL PART OF THE ENERGY SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

The Saudi Arabian energy transformation includes not only renewables but also nuclear energy. By 2040, 17 GW should cover just under 15 percent of the local electricity demand. The nuclear power program follows a three-pronged approach: large conventional power plants with a capacity of 2.8 GW, smaller, so-called “smart

reactors” with a capacity of 110 MW, and the mining of uranium as a fuel. A tender for a nuclear power plant is still pending. Russia's Rosatom, as well as the South Korean KEPCO are supposed to be pre-qualified. Talks are underway with the USA. For the commercialization of the “Smart Reactor”, the Kingdom plans to launch a consortium with South Korea.

THE PUBLIC INVESTMENT FUND PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE IN POWER PLANT CONSTRUCTION

Saudi Electricity Company (SEC), a state-owned company in Saudi Arabia, is responsible for the expansion and construction of conventional oil and gas power plants. The US\$1.5 billion 1.8 GW combined cycle gas turbine power plant (CCGT) “13” is to be 80 percent complete and will go online at the end of 2020 after construction stops and project extensions. The US\$925 million 1.6 GW CCGT “14” is 55 percent complete and is scheduled to be commissioned in 2023. According to MEED, CCGT “15” is on ice and CCGT “16” is still in the study phase.

In the solar sector, the planned Faisaliah Solar Power Project is worth mentioning. The project is being implemented in part through the REPDO

tendering competition. The first phase of the solar park is part of the REPDO Round II with 600 MW photovoltaics. The expansion by 2 an additional GW is to be carried out directly via the Public Investment Fund (PIF).

The PIF has been in direct contact with national and international project developers since the beginning of 2019 for the award of major solar projects. Contrary to the public communication strategy of the REPDO, the negotiations are not communicated until the award of the contract. Preference will be given to companies that have the capacity and intention to invest sustainably in the local solar value chain.

AUTHOR



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BAHRAIN ANNOUNCES AID PACKAGE WORTH BILLIONS

Growth-inhibiting consequences of the coronavirus pandemic meet an already difficult economic situation.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC SLOWS ECONOMIC GROWTH

The negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new oil price war are burdening Bahrain's already weak economic growth. According to a calculation by the International Monetary Fund, the country needs an oil price of around USD 95 to balance its budget.

The economic situation in the Gulf emirate has been tense since the fall in oil prices. In recent years, low oil revenues have led to high budget deficits and weak economic growth.

It was only with the help of regional support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates in the form of a USD 10 billion low-interest credit line that the economic outlook brightened somewhat. However, the breather did not last long.

With an oil price of 35 US dollars per barrel (159 litres), the budget deficit would rise to over 13 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Should the oil price level off at an annual average of 45 US dollars per barrel, a deficit of 7.5 percent is expected. Economic growth will fall below the original expectations.

The analysts of the Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group have cautiously lowered their growth forecast for Bahrain's gross domestic product (GDP) for the current year 2020 from 2.1 to 1.9 percent. This is based on the assumption that the pandemic will be short - an optimistic scenario. Other institutions have also revised their forecasts downwards.

GOVERNMENT TIGHTENS ITS MEASURES TO PREVENT EPIDEMICS

In Bahrain, the number of Covid-19 infected cases is rising to 377 as of the 24th of March 2020. According to Johns Hopkins University, 164 patients have already recovered. So far there have been two deaths. The government is stepping up its measures to prevent the epidemic in order to stem the spread of respiratory diseases.

Bahrain is suspending the visa-on-arrival program as of the 18th of March 2020. A large number of flights were cancelled. According to the Ministry of the Interior, everyone entering the country from abroad must undergo a 14-day domestic self-quarantine, even those who do not show any symptoms.

FORMULA 1 RACE POSTPONED

The race in the desert of Sakhir, originally planned for 22 March 2020, has been postponed indefinitely. "Safety has top priority," the organizers announced in a statement. The decision had been made in consultation with international

partners and the Kingdom's health crisis team. Ticket sales had already been suspended earlier.

This means that the COVID-19 pandemic is hitting another Achilles heel of the country. Formula 1 makes an important contribution to the tourism industry, which accounts for approximately 6.5 percent (2018) of GDP and is the most important non-oil industry. According to the latest official data, up to 600 million US dollars are raised annually by the race. It remains to be seen when the event can be made up for.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES BILLION-DOLLAR AID PACKAGE

The Gulf emirate has announced an economic stimulus package equivalent to about 11.4 billion US dollars to contain the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The eight-point aid package, equivalent to 29.6 per cent of the Kingdom's annual gross domestic product, is to be implemented over a three-month period, starting in April 2020.

The most controversial issue is the discussion about the continuation of salary payments for employees in the private sector. The measure is to be financed from the resources of the unemployment fund. This is still a draft law that has not yet been passed.

In addition, any water and electricity bills for private

individuals and companies are to be paid by the state. The reference value for the costs to be reimbursed is a comparative value to the previous year's period in 2019.

Individuals and companies will continue to be exempt from rental fees for municipal and industrial land for three months. Companies in the travel industry do not have to pay tourism taxes.

In order to be able to react at short notice, the Bahraini liquidity fund will be almost doubled to the equivalent of US\$ 529.7 million, while the central bank's credit facilities will be increased to US\$ 9.7 billion. The Bahraini government wants to use this to defer debts and extend additional loans.

Finally, Tamkeen, a government agency charged with promoting the private sector, is to provide more loans and support for companies.

AUTHOR



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Photos: unsplash / Antonio Garcia (1), Heena Nazir (1)

TESTIMONY



Wie immer, eine sehr kompetente Vorbereitung und Durchführung von Herrn Faleel und seinem Team.

Meine Erwartungen wurden mehr als erfüllt. Die Qualität der Kontakte ist ausgezeichnet und wir sind aktuell im Gespräch mit mehreren potentiellen Geschäftspartnern für KSA"

"As always, a very competent preparation and implementation by Mr. Faleel and his team. My expectations were more than met. The quality of the contacts is excellent. We are currently in discussion with several potential business partners in KSA."

Dennis Kottman

Export Area Manager, Alois Dallmayr Kaffee oHG

Zum Service der AHK Saudi-Arabien: Business Partner connect

GESALO'S FAVORITES

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD BÖDEKER

Richard Bödeker was directly enchanted by the beauty of the arid landscape and loved the challenge to green the desert.

Richard
Bödeker Park.

Richard Bödeker was born in 1934 in Lehrte near Hannover. He began his apprenticeship as an ornamental gardener in 1950 and later studied horticulture. Since the 70s he worked on the greening of Riyadh and its surroundings. In Saudi Arabia he was lovingly called "Richard of Arabia". The well-known landscape architect died on 14 November at the age of 85.

As a plant lover, he drew inspiration by the survival strategies of desert plants. Acacia trees, for example, can develop 50-meter-deep roots to get water. Sustainability was at the center of his approach to greening Saudi Arabia, which shone through his choices as an architect. His strategy of cut and fill, for instance, took advantage of the materials that can be found in nature – like Riyadh limestone – to build gardens. This approach showed his commitment to respecting the site itself and the local culture.

Richard Bödeker was also convinced that there were more sus-

tainable ways to water the plants in Saudi Arabia. He believed that making use of treated grey water would be the key, since every household produces this. Rather than wasting used water, every citizen could contribute to the irrigation of a tree through this method – enough for ca. 6 million trees in Riyadh.

His relationship to the Saudi clients was special from the first moment – they always shared a very good mutual understanding. He possessed a strength, persuasiveness and ability to assert himself to fight for green gardens and uncommon ideas. This passion made him a green ambassador in the kingdom.

Gardens and plants have been his lifelong passion. And that was the secret of his success: passion and love for his profession. The creation of gardens was his real mission.

He always said that he developed a real love to Saudi Arabia as his favorite country and created many

“ He saw himself as a humble person who just creates gardens. ”

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

lifelong friendships in the kingdom. He did not care for politics. He saw himself as a humble person who just creates gardens”.

CONTACT

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Bödeker Partners
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INFO

Richard Bödeker was involved in following projects, as extract of his works:

- 'Initiative Green' developing a greening strategy for the city in the 1990s
- Diriyah Mosque landscape design
- King Fahd Road, the green corridor
- MOMRA, park and roof greening
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff housing
- Court complex
- King Abdul Aziz Historical Centre parks and gardens
- First ideas for King Salman Park, at that time Riyadh Public Park in the 1980s of last century
- Thumamah Nature Park
- Wadi Hanifah and Wadi Sulai as green lungs of Riyadh
- Many private farms for members of the Royal family and many other clients
- Initiation of a tree nursery for the Riyadh Development Authority
- Regional Park in Al-Hofuf, Jebel Qara



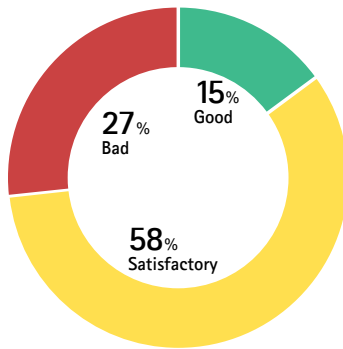
King Abdulaziz Historical Center: we owe many green spaces in Riyadh to Richard Bödeker.

AHK WORLD BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Results for Saudi Arabia - Spring 2020.

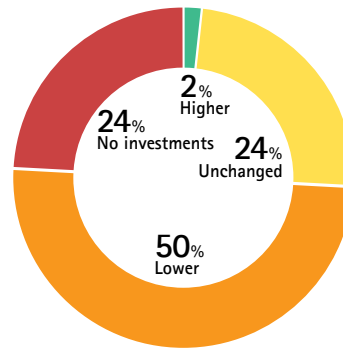
The AHK World Business Outlook is based on a regular DIHK survey of the member companies of the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, delegations and representative offices (AHKs). In spring 2020, it collected feedback from more than 4,000 German companies, branches and subsidiaries, as well companies closely related to Germany.

1. Current situation of the company company



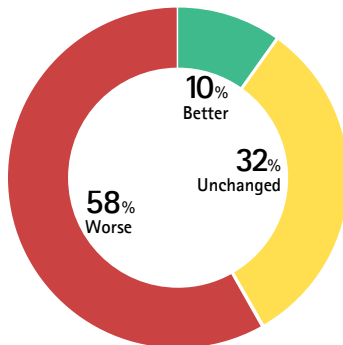
About one third of the surveyed companies worldwide see the current business situation as bad.

4. Expected investments in the next 12 months



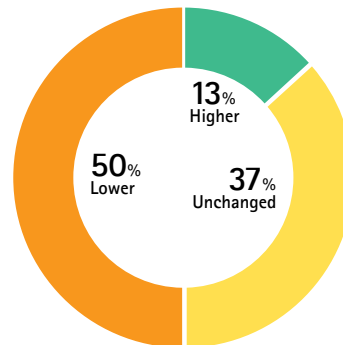
Worldwide, more than half of the surveyed companies is planning to lower the investments in the next 12 months.

2. Expected business development in the next 12 months



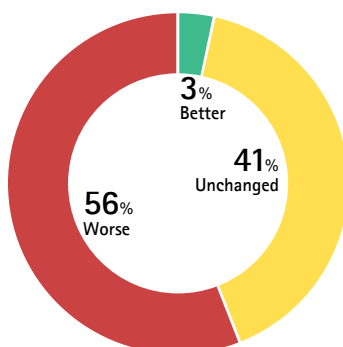
Half of the surveyed companies worldwide expect a worse business development for the next 12 months.

5. Expected change in the number of employees over the next 12 months



Worldwide, only 35% of the surveyed companies is planning to employ less persons in the next 12 months.

3. Expected medium-term economic development in Saudi Arabia



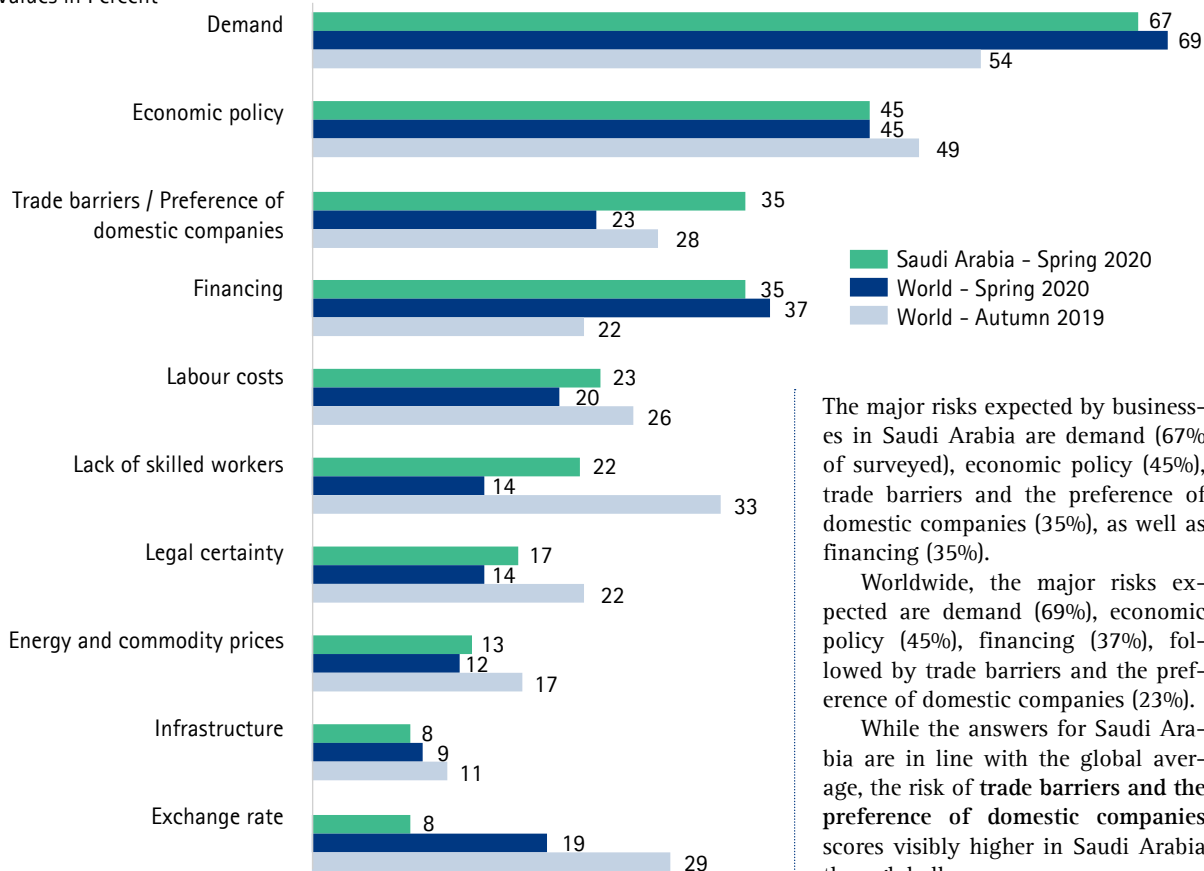
In comparison with Saudi Arabia, companies in the UAE seem to be slightly more pessimistic about the local economic development (with 72% expecting a worse economic development)

In Saudi Arabia we collected feedback from 30 German companies, branches and subsidiaries, as well companies closely related to Germany. For Bahrain, unfortunately, the number of responses have not been sufficient to draw conclusions.

- 47 percent of the responding companies come from the industrial and construction sector.
- 43 percent from the service sector and
- 10 percent are trading companies
- Smaller companies with fewer than 100 employees account for 26.7 percent of the answers. 23.3 percent of the companies employ 100 to 1,000 people. Large companies with more than 1,000 employees account for 50 percent of the respondents.

Coming 12 months – Saudi Arabia vs. Worldwide PERCEIVED RISKS FOR THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Values in Percent



The major risks expected by businesses in Saudi Arabia are demand (67% of surveyed), economic policy (45%), trade barriers and the preference of domestic companies (35%), as well as financing (35%).

Worldwide, the major risks expected are demand (69%), economic policy (45%), financing (37%), followed by trade barriers and the preference of domestic companies (23%).

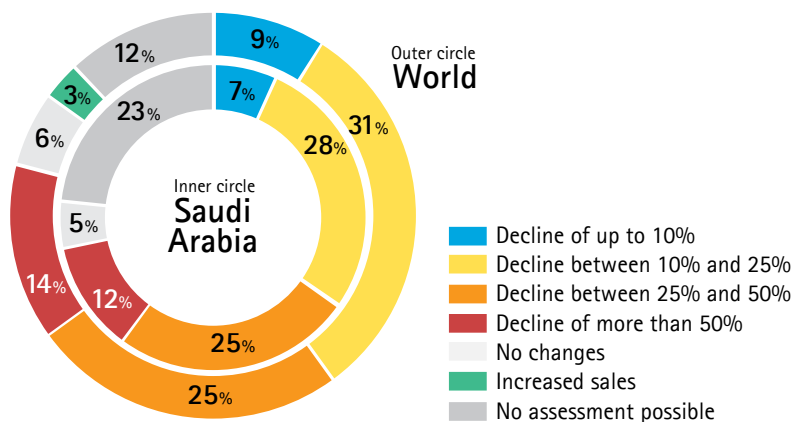
While the answers for Saudi Arabia are in line with the global average, the risk of trade barriers and the preference of domestic companies scores visibly higher in Saudi Arabia than globally.

Impact of Covid-19 – Saudi Arabia vs. Worldwide

CHANGES IN SALES AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

72% of the surveyed companies in Saudi Arabia expect lower sales as a result of Covid-19, while this number reaches 79% worldwide.

Smaller companies are expected to be impacted to a larger degree. Worldwide, 20% of the surveyed small companies with less than 100 employees expect a decline in sales of more than 50%.



MARKET ENTRY: FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Over the last eight months, the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management established a great working relationship with the GESALO. They helped us to enter the Saudi Arabian market with their network and their great services which have resulted in the attainment of well-known Saudi companies as our clients. The strong relationship between Saudi Arabia and Germany was the reasoning and motivation for us to offer our education services in Saudi Arabia too. The Frankfurt School continues to contribute to the development of Saudi Arabia with ideas, values and business expertise.

With the sudden emergence of the current global crisis, we have had to re-think our strategies and plans for our current and new Saudi initiatives. The delivery of our programs has been restructured to make use of smart technology, to not hinder the education process. As a well-established institution, the ideas, values and business expertise we possess will survive this turbulent time.

The Frankfurt School of Finance and Management was founded by the German Banking industry in the 1950s and is based in Frankfurt, Germany. With more than 50

years of experience in education and consulting, they have become one of Europe's leading business schools by providing bachelor and master programs as well as executive education in finance, leadership, and management for clients from various industries from around the globe. The consulting arm offers benchmarking services for world institutions that care about Non-OECD countries.



Meeting at the Zamil Group.
(from left: Dr. Al Matar, M. Faleel, Dr. Zamil, A. Emser, J. Müller).

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Photo: Frankfurt School (f)

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Business roundtable at GESALO attended by German Company Representatives as well as Mr. Hauptmann and Mr. Bernstiel (MbB).

At the invitation of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Berlin, a German delegation to Riyadh was led by Member of the German Bundestag (MdB) Mark Hauptmann in November.

As part of the trip to Riyadh, GESALO used its network to organize meetings with official government institutions and sector-specific local companies, where the delegation participants were accompanied by Mr. Mohammed Faleel, Mr. Dorian Lötzer, and Mrs. Iman Staab.

Dr. Samra-Rohte also welcomed the delegation to a roundtable at the GESALO premises, where representatives of German companies in Riyadh were able to share their insights into doing business in Saudi Arabia.

One of these companies is PolyCare, which has developed a market-ready concept that allows the inexpensive production of durable and environmentally friendly polymer concrete construction elements. The special feature of this development allows the use of local raw materials such as desert sand. The pluggable elements guarantee an extremely fast and precise construction without the use of trained specialists or heavy construction equipment. PolyCare was kind enough to share some insights about their itinerary.

ABUNAYYAN GROUP

The Abunayyan Group originated about 70 years ago in the field of water and agriculture. Meanwhile, it sees itself as a turnkey partner who provides integrated solutions in water, power and energy applications. KSB has a Joint Venture with Abunayyan and produces pumps in Saudi Arabia.



D. Müller-Judex (Solmove), M. Shaheen (Abunayyan Trading), Dr. Dust (Polycare), M. Faleel (GESALO)



A. Al-Shawaf, A. Moussa (Dept. Ext. Mngr.), Engr. Elshobaky (CTO), A. Khan (Alshawaf Law Firm).



K. AlSwaikleh (Invest. Director), F. M. Almalik (CEO), Eng. M. Rida (GM Tech.), B. Hariri (DEPT)

In total, the group employs around 4500 people in 8 operational sectors and 14 business units. Our contact partner was the COO Mr. Shaheen, which mainly trades in machinery.

AL HOKAIR GROUP

We had the next meeting with the Al Hokair Group. The group was started in 1975 to invest in the sectors of entertainment and hospitality under the leadership of Sheikh Abdulmohsin Alhokair. Over five decades, the group's projects expanded to include 79 entertainment centers and 34 hotels spread in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In addition to its activities in the hotel sector, the group also has several production facilities for building materials, e.g. plastic, plasterboard, and precast concrete parts. In this area, around 400 employees are employed in 11 factories. The entire company employs around 4100 people.

AL BAWANI

The Al Bawani Group is one of Saudi Arabia's largest construction companies. The group is fam-

ily-owned and employs around 11,000 people. The project volume is around 7 billion SAR. We were welcomed by a very competent team and had an extremely pleasant and interesting mutual presentation and discussion.

Overall, this trip was extremely helpful because it provided completely new insights into contemporary Saudi Arabia and made old prejudices obsolete. The support from the Saudi side but also the German side (German Embassy and GESALO) was exemplary and helpful beyond all expectations.

In only three days contacts were established for which one normally needs months if one can organize it at all by oneself.

I am sure that this was my first, but certainly not my last trip to this wonderful country.

AUTHOR



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info@poly-care.de

MADE IN GERMANY FOR KSA TOURISM

The German textile company Johannes Kaechele GmbH sees itself well prepared for future tasks and shows creativity and social commitment even in times of crisis.



Finest banquet linen produced by Kaechele.

As a textile company rich in tradition, founded in 1911 in Laichingen in the heart of the Swabian Alb, Johannes Kaechele GmbH can look back on over a hundred years of textile competence and passion for table, bed, banquet and terry linen. For many years now we have been working successfully in the national and international market for hotel textiles and continue to maintain our location in Germany.

The owner Thomas Grabensee joined the company in 2014 and took over the sole management from 2017. With his wife Karin, who takes care of the key accounts in the international area, they have been successfully expanding these markets ever since.

Terms such as appreciation and sustainability in the manufacturing process are not just words for us - we live this philosophy in our daily relationship with our employees, customers and suppliers. We have maintained

personal contacts with our suppliers, almost all of whom produce in Europe, for many years. Only in this way is it possible to ensure a constant and high quality, which guarantees a long durability in the object sector.

Our team accompanies you from the first planning to the completion of the project as a competent partner for textile hotel equipment, catering/banquet events and restaurant projects. Due to our in-house sewing and embroidery department, we are able to produce even very individual solutions at short notice.

Due to the cooperation with an internationally experienced logistics and customs partner on our side, nothing stands in the way of a smooth handling of the shipment.

Our long-standing contacts in Saudi Arabia have shown an increased demand in recent years. To further expand this market, we have decided to cooperate with the AHK in Riyadh.

Our first trip in 2018, accompanied by Mr. Mohammed Faleel and further contacts developed promisingly.

Currently, due to the prevailing pandemic, we have changed our production in house, in order to contribute our part to slow down the spread of the corona virus. Thus, we support local institutions with the production of reusable, washable facemasks made of cotton fabric.

Kaechele sees itself as very well positioned regarding the growing tourism sector in Saudi Arabia and accepts the challenge to expand the growing market.



Quality control performed by Karin and Thomas Grabensee.

CONTACT

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TRADE FAIRS - PERFECT FOR OPENING NEW MARKETS

Trade fairs in Germany are expecting strong international participation after the corona period.

What do companies need to access international markets? They need to establish contacts with potential customers, sales and service partners and they also require platforms for the public presentation of their products and themselves. To achieve these goals, a variety of individual instruments are required - or a well-organized trade fair participation. After all, trade fairs have the broadest range of functions of all marketing instruments: trade fairs help to establish and maintain customer relationships, find partners and personnel and position the company. Trade fairs are test markets for new products and, of course, trade fairs also serve to prepare and realize business.

Trade fairs in Germany can fulfil this variety of functions particularly well because they have a high acceptance as a sourcing instrument. Around 60 % of visitors have at least a partial influence on purchasing decisions. This guarantees a high quality of contacts during discussions at the trade fair stand. On the other hand, an importer will find a wide range of products from all over the world and can directly compare qualities and prices.

It is easy to find the right target groups at German trade fairs. Because there is a dedicated trade fair for almost every industry - from construction machinery to electronic games. Every year there are around 170 trade fairs of international importance. Trade fairs in Germany are global

markets. Around 60 % of the exhibitors and over a third of the visitors come from abroad.

Currently, participants from all over the world are unfortunately unable to benefit from the quality of German trade fairs, because, as in many other countries, the trade fair industry is at a standstill due to the restrictions imposed by the Corona crisis. However, AUMA assumes that the German trade fairs will be fully operational in the course of autumn. By then the international participants will benefit again from all the quality features.

German trade fairs are organized professionally and in close cooperation with the participating industry and they have internationally leading standards in service and infrastructure.

Participants from Saudi Arabia, for example, have already made good use of German trade fairs. In 2019, around 60 exhibitors presented themselves at around 20 trade fairs, and approximately 9,000 visitors are registered each year. About 30 exhibitors and 1,500 visitors in 2019 came from Bahrain.

AUMA expects that foreign participants will use the German trade fairs in the post-Corona period just as much as before.

HARALD KÖTTER is the Director of Public Relations & Trade Fairs Germany Division Deutschland im AUMA, the Association of the German Trade Fair Industry

CONTACT h.koetter@auma.de



Messe Berlin.

AUMA

The Association of the German Trade Fair Industry, combines all the forces that shape the trade fair market on a partnership basis. Founded in 1907, it currently represents the national and international interests of 74 members. These include exhibition organisers as well as associations that represent exhibitors, service companies and visitors. AUMA's members share the following aims:

- Trade fairs as the number one marketing instrument for exhibiting and visiting industries
- Germany as the leading location for international trade fairs worldwide
- Trade fairs organised by German companies abroad as leading events in their fields

EXPLORE & CONNECT

GESALO are the official representative of some of the most renowned German trade fair companies. We help companies from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen to exhibit their products and services in the shows we represent and thereby to establish and strengthen business connections. Our exhibitors and visitors receive a personalized and targeted service. Whether you are interested in exhibiting in a fair or just to visit, please contact the respective GESALO colleague for detailed information.

SEP 23 - 25



WHAT Asia Fruit Logistica

WHERE Singapore

WEB www.asiafruitlogistica.com

CONTACT Mrs. Iman Staab,
staab@ahk-arabia.com

See you in Singapore! ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA (AFL) is the only annual international trade exhibition for fresh fruit and vegetable marketing in Asia which focuses exclusively on the fresh produce sector and related value chain for the whole Asian region. Companies and organizations from every continent and every sector of the trade – from smaller companies wanting to attract the Asian market with new products, to major organizations already established in the region.

AFL brings together key players of the business from all over the world, which makes this top-quality event highly valuable for both visitors and exhibitors. 810 exhibitors from over 40 countries and more 12,000 visitors from over 70 countries attended Asia's top networking event in 2019.



OCT 27 - 30



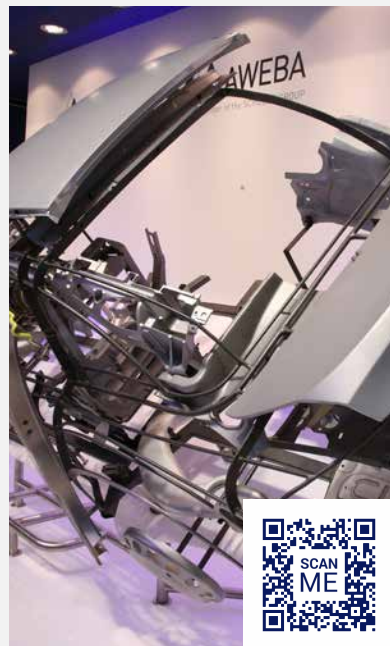
WHAT EuroBlech

WHERE Hanover, Germany

WEB www.glasstec-online.com

CONTACT Mr. Asif Ansari,
ansari@ahk-arabia.com

Innovations for smart sheet metal working. In the era of digital change, the sheet metal working industry has acquired pole position. Key topics such as e-mobility and sustainable production are important drivers for new materials and products as well as the digitalization of manufacturing processes including planning, control, and logistics.



NOV 10 - 13



WHAT *electronica*
WHERE *Munich, Germany*
WEB *electronica.de*
CONTACT *Mr. Asif Ansari*
ansari@ahk-arabia.com

International gathering for the electronics industry. Exhibitors from nearly every sub-sector of the electronics industry from at least 50 countries around the world with a comprehensive range of exhibits, all at a single location: Such a high concentration of innovations at this level is only available at electronica. The exhibitors are expecting you: from all branches of industry,

i.e. from industrial electronics, telecommunications, energy and electromobility to the banking and insurance industry, and from all areas of responsibility, i.e. from hardware developers and software developers to the logistics sector and human resources.



NOV 16 - 19



WHAT *MEDICA*
WHERE *Duesseldorf - Germany*
WEB *www.medica-tradefair.com*
CONTACT *Mr. Asif Ansari*
ansari@ahk-arabia.com

World Forum for Medicine. Delve into the world of medical technology! Experience high-tech products, meet world market leaders, hidden champions and start-ups or visit the top-class forums and conferences.



NOV 17-20



WHAT *EuroTier*
WHERE *Hanover, Germany*
WEB *www.eurotier.com*
CONTACT *Mr. Asif Ansari*
ansari@ahk-arabia.com

First in animal farming. Exhibitors from all over the world to present their innovations for cattle and poultry farming as well as in the fields of aquaculture, sheep and goat rearing and livery yards. In addition to the latest innovations, visitors will also find a wide range of special side events – our Technical Programme that provides plenty of opportunities to learn and share information at expert level.

NOV 24 - 27



WHAT *bauma China*
WHERE *Shanghai, China*
WEB *www.bauma-china.com*
CONTACT *Mr. Asif Ansari*
ansari@ahk-arabia.com

Our competence your innovation! bauma CHINA 2018 attracted 212,500 visitors as well as 3,350 exhibitors from 38 countries. The show occupied all 330,000 square meters of exhibition space at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre.

The trade fair is the gateway for international companies to the Chinese market and promotes interaction with and among exhibitors and visitors by

responding better to their needs, facilitating trade and communication more intelligently and digitally, and providing participants with efficient services.



INDEFINITE ISOLATION IN MANAMA

Our DEInternational Consultant Dorian Lötzer was on holiday in Singapore in late February and was among the first to experience Bahrain's quarantine regulations. After more than seven weeks working from home, Dorian shares his insights.

HOW I GOT HERE

I had planned to go on holiday to Asia via Bahrain in late February to recharge before what I knew would be a busy period in March and April before Ramadan. Little did I know that we would soon see a complete overhaul of how we do business.

When I left to visit family in Singapore, the city had about 70 confirmed cases, which I deemed serious enough to take care on public transportation but not serious enough to cancel the trip entirely. Less than 48 hours after arriving, Bahrain announced a several-day suspension for all flights arriving from Dubai (my transit airport) and quarantine measures for all travellers returning from a list of “high-risk countries”, which (unfortunately) included Singapore.

As you can probably imagine, the holiday included a lot of messages from concerned family members and a constant refreshing of websites for updates. Throughout the trip, the “how and when” of my return remained unclear. I was especially concerned about potential quarantine regulations, as these were still being developed at the time.

In the end, I was able to get on the first flight from Dubai to Manama

after an extended layover in the UAE. Upon landing, my name was called out and I was asked to remain on the plane. The Bahrain International Airport staff had organised transport to a purpose-built quarantine tent in an unused part of the airport for me and fellow “high-risk” travellers.

We spent about 3 hours there all-in-all, which involved many men and women in protective gear, a lot of waiting, and a particularly uncom-

fortable experience with a doctor and his nasal swab. In the end, we were cleared to return home with the instructions to not leave the premises for two weeks. This was on March 1st.

Before my home isolation was over, the causeway back to Saudi Arabia was closed, which means I found myself stuck for the foreseeable future. Thankfully, I have family and friends in Bahrain and have been able to live here since. They have also supported me by providing me with food (while make sure to keep a safe distance), stocking up my supply to last the two weeks of quarantine.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

As the weeks passed, I have been able to adjust to the situation working from home. Our team is a great



GESALO Team: Yoga online meeting.



My Home-office space.

support network (having started teleworking themselves just a few weeks later) and while I miss the social interaction of a real office and my life in Riyadh, we are organising daily calls and activities to lighten the mood (this week: group yoga!).

For those of you that are still at the beginning of social distancing, a few tips (Full disclosure, I am just speaking from my own experience and research. This does not qualify as medical advice):

1. Make sure to find a routine
While there is a large temptation to just wake up and roll towards your desk in your pyjamas, it is important to simulate your normal daily routine. Wake up early, make some coffee, put on some work clothes and catch up on the news before getting to work.
2. It's better to work normal hours full-time than all day part-time.
It is easy to be distracted working

from home (and this may not be an option for many of you that suddenly find themselves drafted as part-time teachers for your children) but try to stick to your regular working hours of concentrated work. If you keep half-doing tasks all day, you won't be able to mentally shut off and might find yourself more easily overwhelmed.

3. Stay healthy!

Whenever possible, try to keep fresh produce in your diet and find spaces to fit in some light exercise. Don't forget to get up from your desk regularly and walk around the house to stimulate your blood circulation! Also, don't forget to keep in touch with your colleagues and loved ones virtually. It doesn't substitute real physical interaction, but video calls go a long way in satisfying our need for social activity. Wash your hands and clean your workspace regularly.

4. Finally: Keep busy but pace yourself.

I know it seems like we are in a state of emergency and need to be "on" all the time, but chances are we are in this for the long haul and we will burn out quicker than we realise if we don't take care of ourselves. If you're one of the lucky people who find themselves with more free time than usual, use this time to catch up on the media on your to-do list. If you find yourself under-stimulated, there are a lot of great deals at the moment for online courses. Pick up a new hobby or learn some new skills for work – your boss will thank you!

DORIAN LÖTZER

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GESALO IN THE TIME OF COVID -19

To comply with local measures, the German Saudi Arabian Liaison Office for Economic Affairs is operating from their home office.

We are still available and operating as usual to continue to support our German-Saudi and German-Bahraini Business community. We have digitalized some of our services and can now offer you meetings with our employees and business partners from the comfort of your own home.

Furthermore, we are organizing regular webinars and digital conferences. Please follow our social media accounts and our website for upcoming events.

Dr. Samra-Rohte, delegate of GESALO, said: "COVID-19 is one of the biggest challenges GESALO, part of the German Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK), has seen since it was founded in Riyadh more than 40 years ago.

However, thanks to digitalization and a solid long-standing business relationship with our partners we will overcome the crisis and look forward to emerging stronger after the crisis through further fruitful cooperation."

JAN MÜLLER

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#WeAreThereForYou

Homeoffice

MORE INFO

To keep you updated on the current measures on COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain we established a special Website.



[saudiarabien.ahk.de/infocenter/
updates-covid-19](https://saudiarabien.ahk.de/infocenter/updates-covid-19)

OUR NEW COLLEAGUE



ROSA ALJOHANI
German Desk Jeddah

Rosa AlJohani studied industrial and product design at Darmstadt University (Hochschule). She completed her Master's degree in Design Projects from the University of Niederrhein. Rosa is a Saudi National. During her academic journey and the 12 years that she lived in Germany, she did not only learn the German language but also enjoyed and appreciated very much the overall experience she gained by diving into the German culture. In her free time, Rosa enjoys spending time with her family, and her two daughters. To relieve the daily stress and break the routine, she loves to cook and bake international dishes that she discovered while traveling. We are welcoming Rosa in her new position as a Representative of our German Desk in Jeddah.

OUR TEAM



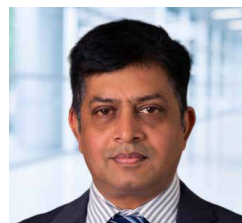
DR. DALIA SAMRA-ROHTE

*Delegate of German Industry
Et Commerce for Saudi Arabia,
Bahrain and Yemen*



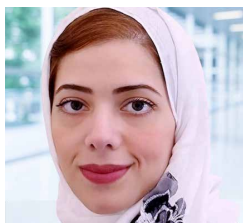
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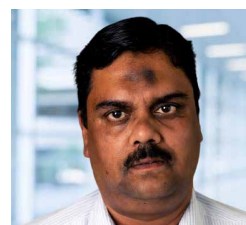
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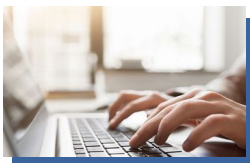
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