

Trade Mission: Saudi Arabia and the UAE

Saudi Arabia Overview

Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Gulf region with a population of 34 million, and the largest economy in the Arab World with a GDP of USD 700 billion. Saudi Arabia is the second-largest export market in the Gulf region for the U.S. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program (NTP) suggest a paradigm shift from a public sector-driven economy to one where job creation and economic growth are driven by the private sector. The NTP outlines USD 4 billion in ICT initiatives over the next five years and USD 1.5 billion in transportation initiatives over the next four years.

The top opportunities for Virginia exporters in Saudi Arabia include:

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Defense and Security
- Oil and Gas
- Architecture, Engineering, and Construction
- Transport and Logistics

UAE Overview

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the top U.S. export market in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and is a critical, regional hub for American companies doing business throughout the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. Known for its advanced transportation infrastructure, UAE is a recognized trade hub with 75% of the world being reachable within an eight hour flight. As the leading commercial hub serving the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, the UAE continues to play a central role as a regional trade, logistics, and tourism hub. The pandemic has driven the UAE to recommit to self-sufficiency and reliability, shifting focus toward renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, indigenous manufacturing base, and investments in education and healthcare advances. UAE is embracing the fourth Industrial Revolution and is driving digitalization from the government level down to enhance



Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

its economic security. AI, IoT, Blockchain, and Big Data cut across every industry.

Top opportunities for Virginia exporters to the United Arab Emirates include:

- Information and Telecommunications
- Healthcare Services
- Design and Construction
- Defense
- Aerospace and Defense Equipment

Opportunities in Saudi Arabia

Defense

Defense has always been a major part of Saudi imports, from equipment to training. The recent introduction of Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI) aligns with the Vision 2030 goal of increasing the Saudi national workforce in the defense sector. The aim of SAMI is to localize 50% of government military spending by 2030.

Healthcare

In line with the 2030 Vision, Saudi Arabia is promoting private sector investment within the healthcare sector, including the privatization of the Kingdom's medical cities. Under the National Transformation Program 2020 (NTP), this will see public healthcare act as more of a regulator than provider as more private investors, both international and domestic, are invited to invest in the healthcare sector.

Education

One of the key underpinning goals of Vision 2030 is "Saudization." Saudization is the necessity of business to employ a percentage of Saudi nationals as part of their workforce, reducing the dependency on expatriates working in the Kingdom. To achieve a greater national workforce, Saudi Arabia is investing in the development of the education system to better equip young Saudis to be competitive when applying for jobs that have historically been awarded to Western expats.

Infrastructure

With Vision 2030 in full swing, the infrastructure sector of Saudi Arabia has been incredibly busy. Additionally, delays from COVID-19 created an urgency around maintaining existing projects as well as starting new projects. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) recently announced plans for an environmentally friendly and sustainable mega-city called "The Line."

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The trip opened new business opportunities for us that we would not have otherwise. Having been to Saudi Arabia several times, I was impressed by the quality of the meetings.

Trade Mission to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia

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I found out more about the potential business market in Saudi Arabia through this trip than I ever would have otherwise. VEDP's contractor set up immensely credible meetings.

Trade Mission to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia

Opportunities in the UAE

Security & Defense

Opportunities for Virginia companies include: artificial intelligence; big data analytics; blockchain; virtual and augmented reality; quantum computing and encryption; robotics; IoT; cyber defense; electronic warfare and intelligence; advanced energy capture, storage and propulsion; and smart materials and sensors. An emphasis is placed on partnering, co-development, tech-transfer, and knowledge sharing.

ICT, Smart Solutions, and Open Data

All government offices have incorporated online services and open source data that can be shared and integrated to support sustainable economic development in key sectors. As the government ramps up to achieve its goal of going paperless by 2025, it is seeking smart solutions capable of placing all government transactions and procedures online.

Healthcare & Life Sciences

UAE is intent on being a life sciences hub and is eager to participate in collaborative research and development as it increases its investment in local pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Opportunities for Virginia companies include: cardiovascular disease education, prevention, and treatment; diabetes education, prevention, and treatment; childhood obesity education, prevention, and treatment; early diagnosis and treatment of cancers; increasing the percentage of accredited health facilities; and increasing the quality of healthcare services in general.

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Through the efforts of VEDP's local UAE contractor, I had the opportunity to meet with several entities with which I might have been unable to secure an appointment on my own.

Trade Mission to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia

Trade Mission Details

Objective:

The objective for this trip is to arrange and conduct quality meetings between you, our VEDP client, and potential sales partners (agents, representatives, or distributors) and/or customers in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Our ultimate goal is for these meetings to help you generate new sales for your company to customers in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and to provide you with market intelligence only attainable by an in-country visit.

Trade Mission Dates

February 12–17, 2023

Registration Deadline

December 16, 2022

Schedule:

We will visit Riyadh and possibly Jeddah or Dammam (depending on demand) while in Saudi Arabia. In the UAE we will be based in Dubai from which other primary business centers (e.g., Abu Dhabi, Sharjah) are easily accessible by car in approximately two hours or less.

The schedule is planned as follows, and is subject to change:

Date	Day	Activity
December 16, 2022	Friday	Last day for registration
February 10, 2023	Friday	Latest day to depart the U.S.
February 12, 2023	Sunday	Trade Mission begins; individual meetings in Saudi Arabia
February 13, 2023	Monday	Individual meetings in Saudi Arabia
February 14, 2023	Tuesday	Individual meetings in Saudi Arabia; travel to UAE
February 15, 2023	Wednesday	Individual meetings in UAE
February 16, 2023	Thursday	Individual meetings in UAE
February 17, 2023	Friday	Individual meetings in UAE
February 18, 2023	Saturday	Return to the U.S.



Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Frequently Asked Questions:

How many Virginia companies will participate?

The registration process is ongoing. Based on past trade missions, we expect 6–10 Virginia companies to participate.

What is the cost for my company to participate?

You must pay the trade mission participation fee of \$2,500 to VEDP at the time of registration. The participation fee includes the following:

- Identifying, contacting, and pre-qualifying local distributors, reps, and/or partners, and organization of your meetings with interested prospects
- Briefings on “Doing Business in Saudi Arabia and the UAE”
- Your VEDP Trade Mission Leader and in-country consultant on hand during the week to ensure everything runs to plan

Additional *estimated* costs you will incur include (but are not limited to):

Expense	Estimated amount (\$)
Roundtrip airfare from Dulles to Riyadh, Dubai to Dulles, economy class	2,000
Hotels (7 nights at \$300 per night)	2,100
Meals	750
Airport transfers, taxis, public transportation and other miscellaneous items	500

How are the meetings organized?

VEDP has engaged the services of AEI Saudi and Channels Business Solutions, highly qualified consulting firms, to identify, screen, and arrange meetings with potential partners for each of our trade mission delegates. AEI Saudi and Channels were selected through a competitive bidding process and has demonstrated extraordinary expertise, enthusiasm, and commitment to the work of introducing Virginia companies to Saudi Arabia and the UAE market. If you would like to learn more about AEI Saudi, please view their website: <https://www.aeisaudi.com/us/>, and for Channels, please review their website: www.channelsmea.com.

How will I get to my meetings?

Saudi Arabia: We will provide group transportation to the local Chambers of Commerce which will likely serve as the venue for your B2B meetings. Should you have an off-site meeting, we will arrange for local transportation.

UAE: You will take a local car/driver to & from your B2B meetings. We will provide detailed instructions and recommendations for transportation for your appointments.

Note: Charges for ground transportation, such as car rental (with or without a driver), will be the responsibility of each mission participant in the UAE and for off-site meeting(s) in KSA.

Will I need an interpreter?

No. A translator is not necessary in either Saudi Arabia or the UAE as English is the widely spoken language of business.

How are airline and hotel reservations handled?

Airline tickets: You book (and pay for) your own airline ticket via local travel agent or online air travel website. If you do not have a travel agent, the Trade Mission Leader can recommend one for you.

Hotels: VEDP will select the hotels and, if possible, arrange for blocks of rooms. For efficiency and security all participants must stay in the same designated hotel in each city. Participants will be responsible for making their own hotel reservations by using a group code provided by the Trade Mission Leader (if a block rate is available). You will pay all hotel room charges directly to the hotel.

How can I verify that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are good markets for my company before we register for the trade mission?

Contact your local International Trade Manager or the Trade Mission Leader (see bottom of last page) immediately! We only want you to make the trip if we think there is good market potential in Saudi Arabia and the UAE for your company. We can perform exploratory market research within a short period of time to verify market potential for you. The more time you give us, the better job we can do!

What are the entry requirements for Saudi Arabia and the UAE? Will I need a passport or visa?

Saudi Arabia: U.S. citizens must have a valid passport with six months validity remaining. You will also require a business visa..

Note: AEI will facilitate the visa application process.

UAE: U.S. citizens must have a valid passport with six months validity remaining. U.S. citizens process their business visas upon arrival to the airport in Dubai.



The event helped to provide an entrance to doing business in UAE, introduced us to a number of potential trade partners in country, and set up meetings with agencies which are interested in our technology. We expect to be back in country soon for followup.

Trade Mission to the
United Arab Emirates
and Saudi Arabia

Registration:

How do I register to participate?

You can register and pay the trade mission fee online by visiting:

<https://saudi-arabia-uae-trade-mission-2023.eventbrite.com>

Contact the Trade Mission Leader for more information:

Nate Day

International Trade Manager

Phone: 540.387.2562

Email: nday@vedp.org



Consultant Bio

Saudi Arabia

Yazan Shukair

Yazan Shukair joined AEI Saudi in 2016 as a Market Entry Consultant with a background in Economics and International trade, helping British and Western businesses within sectors such as education, healthcare, and retail to enter the Saudi market. In this capacity, Yazan has assisted foreign exporters by providing expert advice and guidance on doing business and expanding operations in the Saudi market.

Currently based in Riyadh, Yazan has lived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for over a decade and has worked closely with numerous trade bodies and government organizations such as the UK Department of International Trade, the Welsh Government, Advantage Austria, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and Invest NI.

Yazan has extensive knowledge of the customs, regulations and standards required for the export and import of goods in Saudi Arabia. In his role, he is constantly communicating with authorities such as Ministry of Investment (MISA), Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA), and Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) to find out about latest requirements and policy changes.

Over the years Yazan has organized numerous webinars, market visits, and trade missions to Saudi Arabia while also attending trade shows in support of AEI's partners and clients.

UAE

Jita Singh

Jita Singh is the Managing Partner and Trade Representative for Channels MEA based in Dubai. An entrepreneur by nature, Jita and her partners own and operate multiple regional companies. She has more than 25 years of experience living and doing business in the GCC region and has held many key business advocacy positions. This places her extensive professional network at the disposal of Channels' clients in a region where relationships are key to success.