

KEY MESSAGES

- Saudi Arabia's Voluntary National Review to the 2018 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is the Kingdom's first attempt to conduct a comprehensive review of the status of the SDGs, their alignment with Vision 2030, and the actions taken by national entities including the government sector, the private sector, and non-government organizations to fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- It highlights the progress that has been made in all 17 areas and describes concrete plans that are either in place or in the planning phase to further the Kingdom's position in each of these areas. Key highlights in the report are Saudi Arabia's determination to dramatically raise the living standards of its people, improving food and water security in an environment where the endowment of both is scarce, enhancing health services and targeting the elevation of educational institutions ranking, developing an extensive energy infrastructure and planning heavy investments in renewable energy, aiming at improving the business climate and to invest in the latest technologies, drawing roadmaps for a better infrastructure for roads, railways, airports, ports, water and sewage systems, electricity networks, and other areas, laying out plans to reach sustainable urban development and protect the biodiversity both on land and in water, plans on improving the performance of government institutions and the quality of public services, and a range of other areas which in the report are explored in more detail.
- The report reasserts Saudi Arabia's strong commitment to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by taking actions and an innovative approaches to align the 2030 Agenda and the Saudi Vision 2030 which is an ambitious development blueprint built around three themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation and shares the same timeframe and ultimate goals with the SDGs agenda.

- The VNR report establishes a baseline for tracking progress on the implementation of the goals and identifies some priorities for concentrated action in the implementation process. It also identifies opportunities, challenges and lessons learned and outlines the next steps in the implementation process.
- There are challenges, however, for each of the SDGs areas and that is where the focus of the relevant entity and the SDGs team will be in the years to come. For example, the need to diversify the economy, improve the efficiency of government services, strengthen the participation of youth and women in the labor market, and other priorities are at the forefront of the government's reform effort, and as such an important part of the Saudi SDGs agenda.
- Saudi Arabia's commitment to the international development agenda is reflected not only in the actions it has undertaken domestically, but also the contributions it has generously provided to the development efforts of low-income countries through humanitarian and development assistance. As highlighted in the report, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest donors in the world, with a wide reach across geographical areas and development sectors. It has also become a significant provider of foreign direct investment in a number of developing countries in sectors of great significance in poverty elevation such as agriculture and food processing.
- SDGs-related activities will proceed hand-in-hand with the implementation of Vision 2030 which has already gathered significant momentum. Key priority areas for the SDGs process include improving the quality and coverage of SDG indicators and analysis of data, continuing the process of alignment of state programs and strategies with global development goals as well as targets and indicators, developing strategies for strengthening collaboration among different actors, strengthening the role of SDGs at the sub-national level, enhancing the monitoring and evaluation infrastructure for tracking progress towards the achievement of SDGs at the national and sub-national level, and promoting international partnerships around the SDGs through development assistance, especially at the regional level.