

Unemployment rate of total population in the Kingdom stabilizes relatively at 3.5% in Q1 2024

According to estimates from the Labor Force Survey of the General Authority for Statistics and based on population estimates derived from the Saudi Census 2022, the overall unemployment rate (for Saudis and non-Saudis) recorded 3.5% in the first quarter of 2024. This marked a slight increase of 0.1 percentage points compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, and a yearly decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared to the first quarter of 2023. The Saudi unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2024 reached 7.6%, showing a 0.2 percentage points drop compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, and a yearly decrease of 1.1 percentage points compared to the first quarter of 2023.

On the other hand, the results indicated an increase in the labor force participation rate for Saudis in the first quarter of 2024 by 1.0 percentage point compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, reaching 51.4%. The employment-to-population ratio for Saudis also rose by 1.0 percentage point compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, reaching 47.5%, and by 0.5 percentage points compared to the first quarter of 2023.

Increase of labor force participation rate for Saudi females

In the first quarter of 2024, the labor market indicators in the Kingdom showed an increase in the employment to population ratio for Saudi females by 0.6 percentage points, reaching 30.7%. Additionally, the labor force participation rate of Saudi females increased by 0.8 percentage points to reach 35.8%. At the same time, the unemployment rate of Saudi females increased by 0.3 percentage points to reach 14.2%, compared to the previous quarter of 2023.

Regarding Saudi male workers, the employment to population ratio increased, as did the labor force participation rate, by 1.2 and 1.0 percentage points, reaching 63.6% and 66.4% respectively. However, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.4 percentage points to reach 4.2% compared to the previous quarter of 2023.

Increase of participation rate and employment rate for Saudi youth and core working age

In the first quarter of 2024, female Saudi youth aged 15-24 experienced a 0.3 percentage point increase in the employment-to-population ratio, reaching 13.5%. Additionally, there was a 0.7 percentage point increase in the labor force participation rate, reaching 17.6%. However, the unemployment rate increased by 0.9 percentage points to reach 23.0% compared to the previous quarter in 2023. On the other hand, male Saudi youth saw a 1.9 percentage point increase in the employment-to-population ratio, reaching 30.3%, and a 1.3 percentage point increase in the labor force participation rate, reaching 34.3%. Conversely, the unemployment rate decreased by 2.4 percentage points to reach 11.6% compared to the previous quarter in 2023.

The results concerning labor market indicators for the Saudi population (both males and females) in the prime working age group (25-54 years) during the first quarter of 2024 showed a 0.8 percentage point increase in the employment-to-population ratio, reaching 64.6%, and a 1.0 percentage point increase in the labor force participation rate, reaching 69.4%. However, the unemployment rate remained stable at 6.8% compared to the previous quarter in 2023.

For Saudis aged 55 and above, the labor market indicators in the first quarter of 2024 indicated an increase in the employment-to-population ratio, an increase in the labor force participation rate, and a decrease in the unemployment rate compared to the previous quarter in 2023.

Active methods of job search for unemployed Saudis

Saudi job seekers use a variety of active job search methods, with an average of 5.0 active methods per job seeker. The method of asking friends or relatives about job opportunities was the most commonly used job search method recording 87.5%, followed by directly applying to employers by 77.3%, and the use of the national unified employment platform (Jadarat) by 65.1%.

Additional indicators for unemployed Saudis

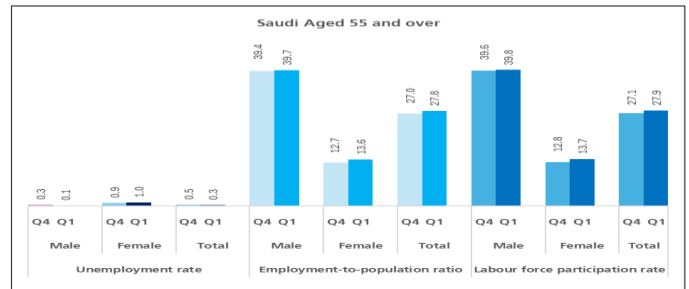
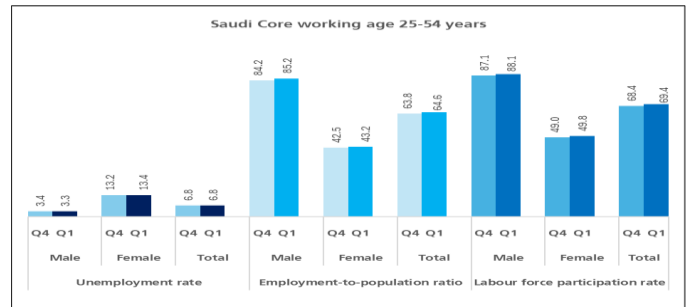
The results showed that 95.9% of unemployed Saudis are willing to accept job offers in the private sector. Additionally, 62.5% of unemployed Saudi females and 45.8% of unemployed Saudi males are willing to commute to work for at least one hour. Furthermore, 81.0% of unemployed Saudi females and 92.1% of unemployed Saudi males indicated that they are willing to work for eight hours or more per day.

Table 1: Key Indicators of the Saudi Labor Market by Quarter

Indicators	First Quarter 2023			Fourth Quarter 2023			First Quarter 2024		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Unemployment rate	2.3	13.4	4.3	1.8	11.1	3.4	1.8	11.8	3.5
Saudi	4.7	16.3	8.7	4.6	13.9	7.8	4.2	14.2	7.6
Non-Saudi	1.2	6.4	1.7	0.6	4.7	0.9	0.8	5.4	1.1
Employment-to-population ratio	81.9	30.6	64.1	82.6	30.8	64.7	81.7	29.5	63.7
Saudi	64.0	29.7	47.0	62.4	30.1	46.5	63.6	30.7	47.5
Non-Saudi	92.8	32.6	80.5	94.7	32.2	81.7	92.6	26.8	78.8
Participation rate	83.8	35.3	66.9	84.1	34.6	67.0	83.2	33.4	66.0
Saudi	67.1	35.5	51.4	65.4	35.0	50.4	66.4	35.8	51.4
Non-Saudi	93.9	34.8	81.9	95.3	33.8	82.5	93.3	28.3	79.6

Source: Estimated data from the Labor Force Survey according to population estimates based on Saudi Census 2022 - General Authority for Statistics

Figure 1. Main Labor Market Indicators for Saudis by Age Group Q4 2023 / Q1 2024



Source: Estimated data from the Labor Force Survey according to population estimates based on Saudi Census 2022 - General Authority for Statistics

Notes

A- New population estimates based on the results of the 2022 census

- The General Authority for Statistics adopted population projections based on the Saudi 2022 Census from the first quarter of 2024 onwards, which had implications on the indicators of the Labor Force Survey results.
- The historical time series is currently being reviewed to re-estimate previous Labor Force Survey indicators and align them with the new population estimates, and estimates for the previous time series will be republished gradually. (See the Labor Market Statistics Methodology Report for more details)

B- Publishing Labor Market Statistics through the Statistical Database Platform

The Statistical Database Platform is a unified electronic portal for publishing all statistical data produced by the General Authority for Statistics. It provides access to a wide range of time series for Labor Force Survey statistics from the second quarter of 2016 to the latest release: <https://database.stats.gov.sa/beta/dashboard/landing>

C- Comparison between Labor Force Survey Estimates and Employment Statistics from Administrative Records

The General Authority for Statistics publishes a Labor Market Bulletin containing key indicators of labor market statistics based on the Labor Force Survey. Additionally, it publishes statistics on the number of participants based on administrative data issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the General Organization for Social Insurance, and the National Information Center.

There are differences in concepts, calculation methodology, and coverage between statistics based on administrative records and Labor Force Survey estimates. Regarding coverage: Labor Force Survey estimates cover all households and settled residents with usual residence within the Kingdom excluding institutions, while administrative records cover only registered individuals. There are also differences in the reference periods between the Labor Force Survey and administrative records.

Since the coverage of the Labor Force Survey is broader than that of administrative records, the absolute numbers from the different sources do not match and there are variations between them.

You can access labor market statistics based on administrative records at the following link: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/ar/814>

Metadata

The Labor Force Survey sample for the quarter is designed based on the 2022 Census frame (see the Labor Market Statistics Methodology Report for more details). The Labor Force Survey is a sample household survey with a sample size of about 96,000 households per quarter.

Data is collected continuously throughout the quarter using both telephone and field interviews.

The survey provides estimates for the population within and outside the labor force. Some of the key indicators for the labor market include:

Unemployment rate: the number of unemployed individuals as a percentage of the labor force (unemployed + employed) in the working-age (15 years and above).

Labor force participation rate: individuals in the labor force as a percentage of the population of working age (15 years and above).

Employment-to-population ratio: employed individuals as a percentage of the population of working age (15 years and above).

The basic definitions according to the ILO standards used in producing these indicators are:

Employed: individuals (15 years and above) who, during the reference period (the reference week):

- Worked for at least one hour for pay or profit (cash or in-kind) as regular employees, temporary employees, employers, or self-employed individuals.
- Assisted a family member for at least one hour, with or without compensation, in any type of business or on a family farm.
- Were temporarily absent from work during the reference week due to vacation, illness, or any other reason and will return to work.
- Seasonal workers during the off-season if they continue to perform some job duties and responsibilities.

Unemployed: individuals (15 years and above) who were:

- Without work during the reference week.
- Actively looking for work during the four reference weeks prior to the interview.
- Available to start work or join the workforce in the reference week or the following two weeks.

Labor force: Represents the labor force (total number of employed and unemployed). In addition to applying ILO standards, the General Authority for Statistics uses Labor Market Policy Committee standards to validate Labor Force Survey data using administrative records data.

Metadata [Link](#)