

Periodic bulletin

Research,
Development &
Innovation Indicators

2025



هيئة تنمية البحث
والتطوير والابتكار
Research, Development
& Innovation Authority

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Executive Summary

This bulletin presents key Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) indicators in the Kingdom, published in 2025 based on the latest national and international data, the following are the most prominent results:

- Domestic R&D expenditure grew by **30.4%** over the past year, reaching **SAR 29.5** billion in 2024, equivalent to 0.63% of GDP.
- The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers increased by **12.8%** compared to 2023, exceeding 41k researchers.
- Granted patents decreased by **13%** in 2025 compared to previous year, indicating a decline in total patents awarded, while efforts continue to support the intellectual property system and strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the Kingdom.

- Saudi Arabia maintained its **fifth-place global** ranking in the 2025 Entrepreneurship Policies and Culture Index. This reflects sustained progress and the continued strengthening of supportive policies and an innovation-driven culture.
- In 2025, the Kingdom ranked **46th among 139 economies** in the Global Innovation Index and **25th among 55 economies** in the Global Intellectual Property Index, reflecting continued progress in innovation and IP protection.

These milestones reflect ongoing national efforts to foster innovation, empower researchers and entrepreneurs, and drive progress toward a knowledge-based economy under Vision 2030. For full details, please see the bulletin content.

Indicators were classified under five key themes:

Innovation Heroes

Boost and make available the skilled people across the RDI value chain



Funding Mechanisms

Funding sources, channels and entities that provide the necessary financial resources



Innovation Ecosystem

Break down pre-existing regulatory barriers in KSA to promote and induce public and private sector innovation



Innovation Bridges

Build and power ecosystem linkages to promote collaboration and accelerate spill-over effects



Innovation Champions

Drive participation and ensure synergy of the private sector with the national RDI agenda



Overview of Most Recent Statistical Findings

For the RDI
Sector



+30%

Increase in domestic
R&D expenditure in
2024 compared to the
previous year.



+12%

Increase in the number
of FTE researchers in
2024, according to the
OECD's Frascati Manual
methodology.



+3,000

Increase since previous
year in the number of
scientific and technical
publications in 2025,
according to Clarivate
platform.



+36%

Government spending
on research and
development grew in
2024 compared to the
previous year.



46

Saudi Arabia's rank
among 139 countries
worldwide in the 2025
Global Innovation Index.

Introduction



As part of the Research, Development and Innovation Authority's mission to lead and coordinate Saudi Arabia's RDI ecosystem, this Bulletin aims to provide access to key data and insights in the RDI sector for the public, researchers, and anyone interested in the field in Saudi Arabia.

This is the second edition in a yearly series designed to share reliable information that helps decision-makers, researchers, and enthusiasts stay informed about progress, discover new opportunities, and build greater awareness of developments in the RDI landscape.

In this Bulletin, **we highlight key indicators and statistics based on the latest available data from 2025**, reflecting the current performance of the national RDI ecosystem, supports transparency, and aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 to foster innovation, and build a sustainable knowledge-based economy.

01

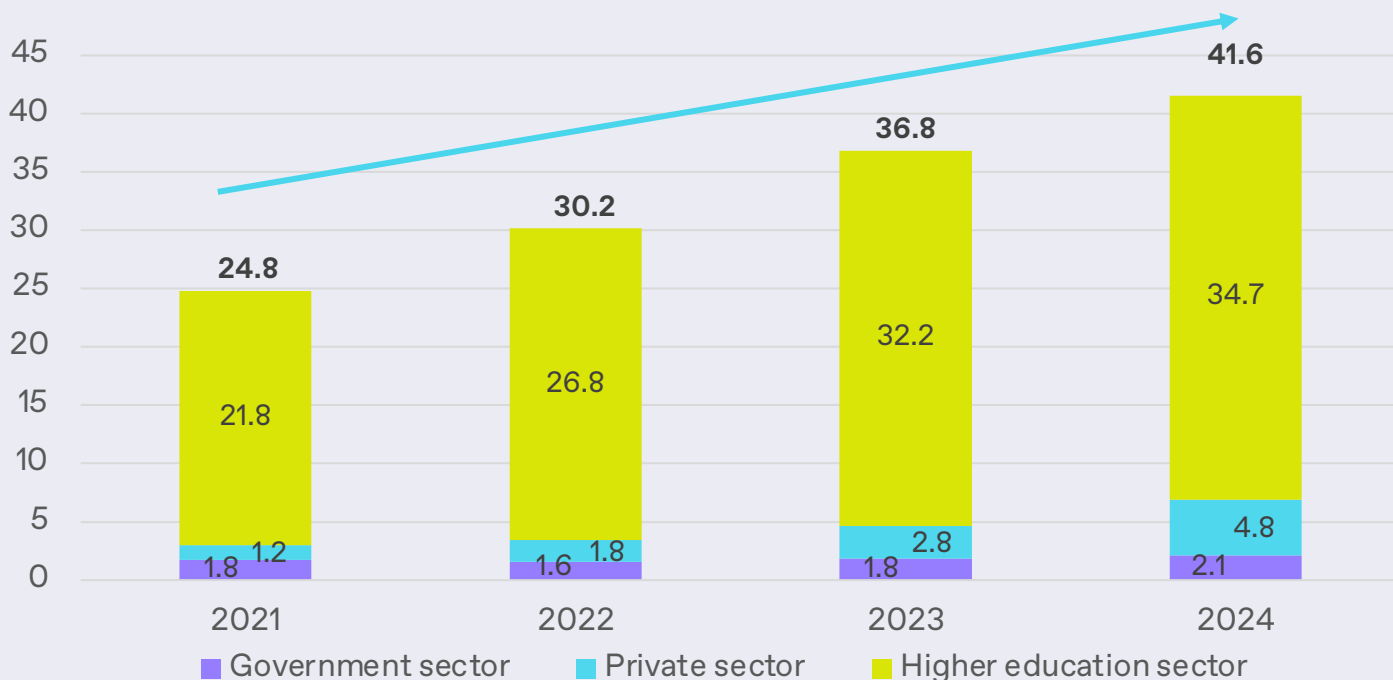
Innovation Heroes

Innovation Heroes

1.1 R&D Researchers

There was a notable **Increase of 12.8%** in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers in R&D between 2023 and 2024.

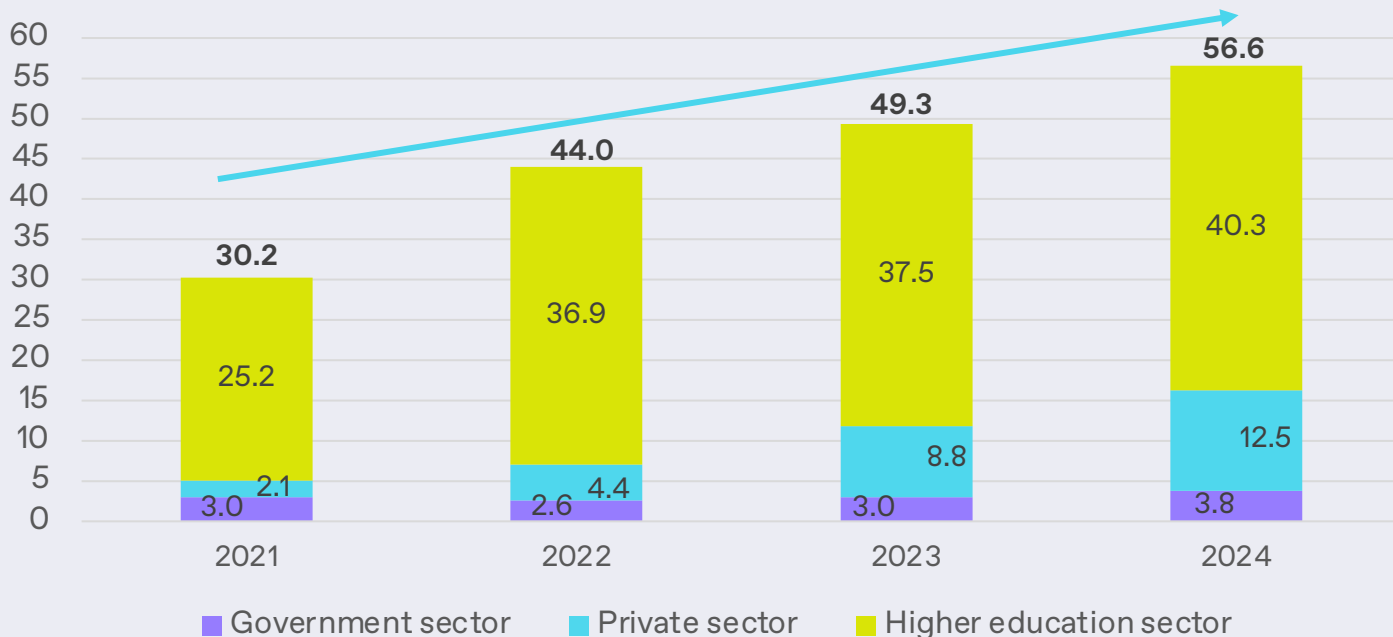
Table 1-1



1.2 R&D Personnel

A substantial **growth of 14.7%** in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) R&D personnel from 2023 to 2024.

Table 1-2



Innovation Heroes

1.3 Foreign Highly Skilled Personnel

In the 2025 World Talent Report by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), Saudi Arabia **ranked 6th globally out of 69 countries** in the Skilled Foreign Labor indicator. This report measures countries' competitiveness in attracting, developing, and retaining skilled talent across three key pillars: Investment and Development, Appeal, and Readiness.

Figure 1-3



Source: the International Institute for Management Development (IMD)

02

Funding Mechanisms

Funding Mechanisms

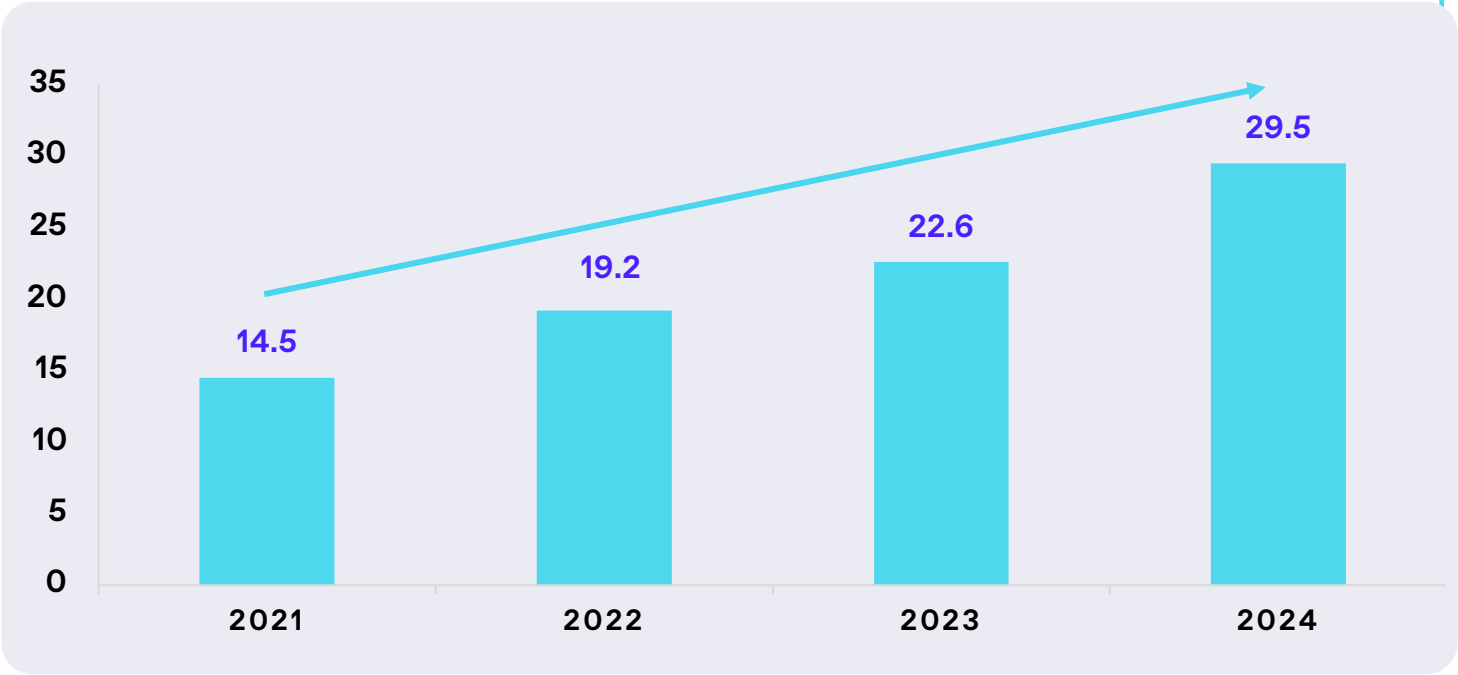
2.1 Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD)

Table 2-1

Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total domestic expenditure on R&D (in billion) ₪	14.5	19.2	22.6	29.5
Gross Domestic Product (in billion) ₪	3,685	4,647	4,570	4,703

Total domestic R&D expenditure has shown a clear and consistent upward trajectory, with the sharpest increase occurring between 2023 and 2024 compared to the period between 2022 and 2023.

Figure 2-1 : Total domestic expenditure on R&D (in billion) ₪

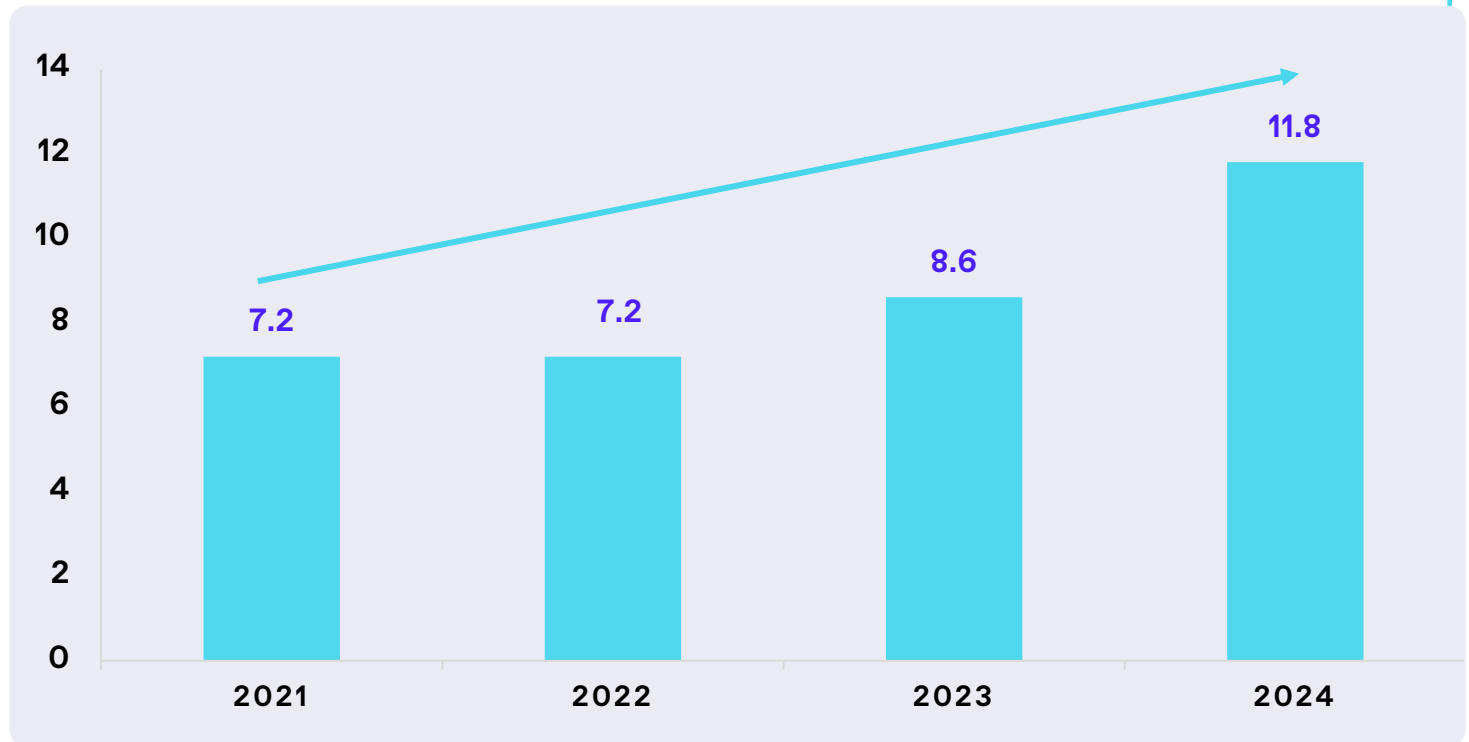


Funding Mechanisms

2.2 Government Expenditure on R&D (GOVERD)

Total spending rose from 8.6 billion AED in 2023 to 11.8 billion AED in 2024, reflecting a growth of 36.8%.

Figure 2-2: Total Government Expenditure on R&D (in Billion) AED



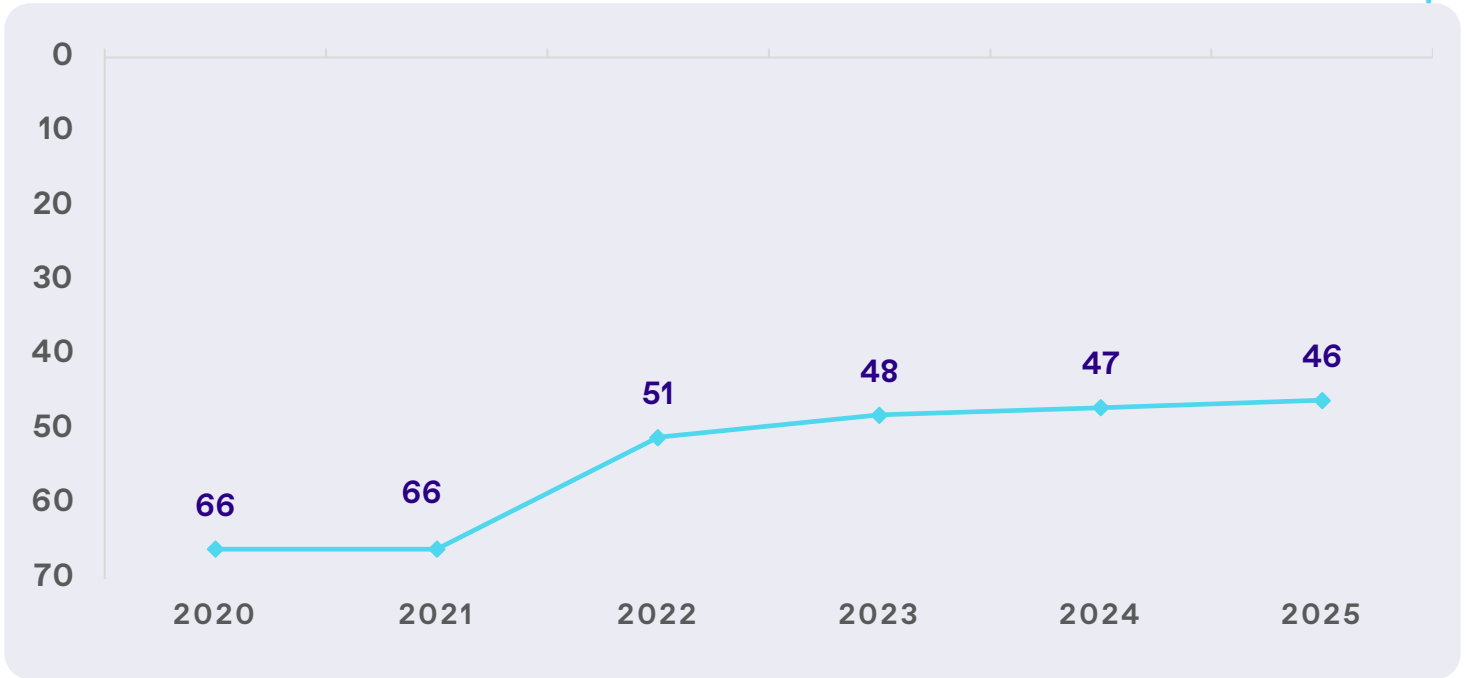
03

Innovation Ecosystem

Innovation Ecosystem

3.1 Ranking in the Global Innovation Index (GII)

Figure 3-1



Key sub-indicators in which the Kingdom achieved leading positions:

**1st
Rank**

In ICT use

**3rd
Rank**

In State of
cluster
development

**1st
Rank**

In Market
capitalization
as % GDP

**5th
Rank**

In
Entrepreneurial
policies and
culture

**4th
Rank**

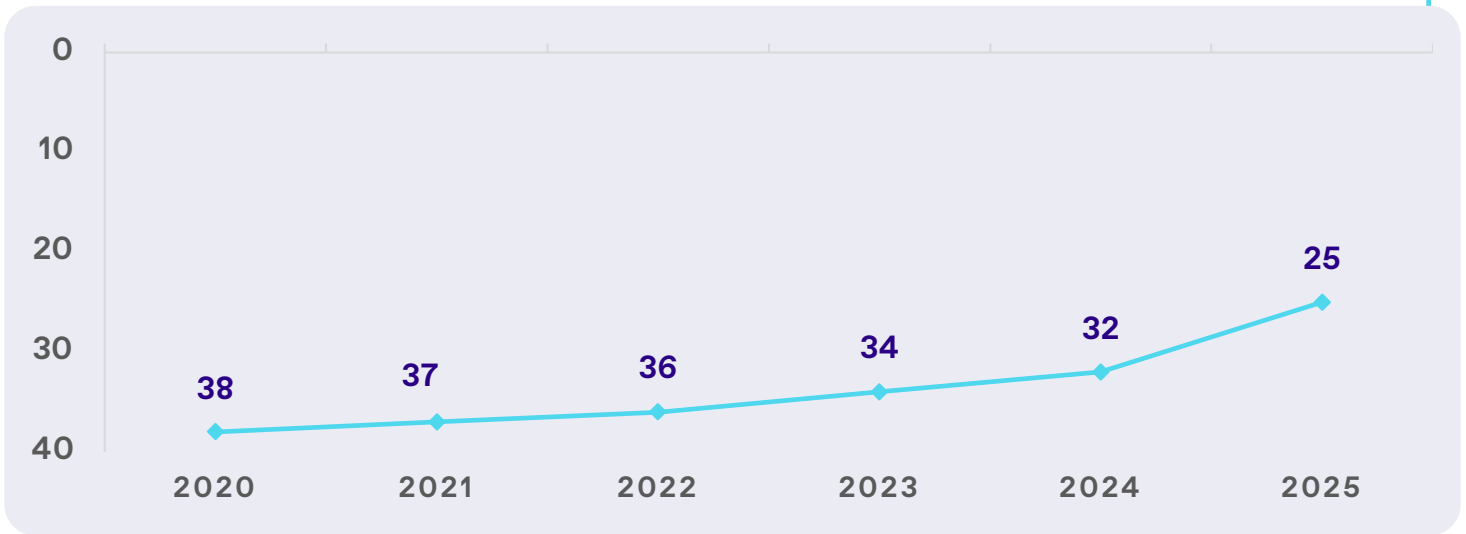
In Finance for
Startups and
Scaleups

Innovation Ecosystem

3.2 Ranking in the International Intellectual Property Index

Saudi Arabia recorded **notable progress** in the International Intellectual Property Index issued by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, among 55 countries, reflecting its continued efforts to strengthen legal protection for intellectual property rights.

Figure 3-2

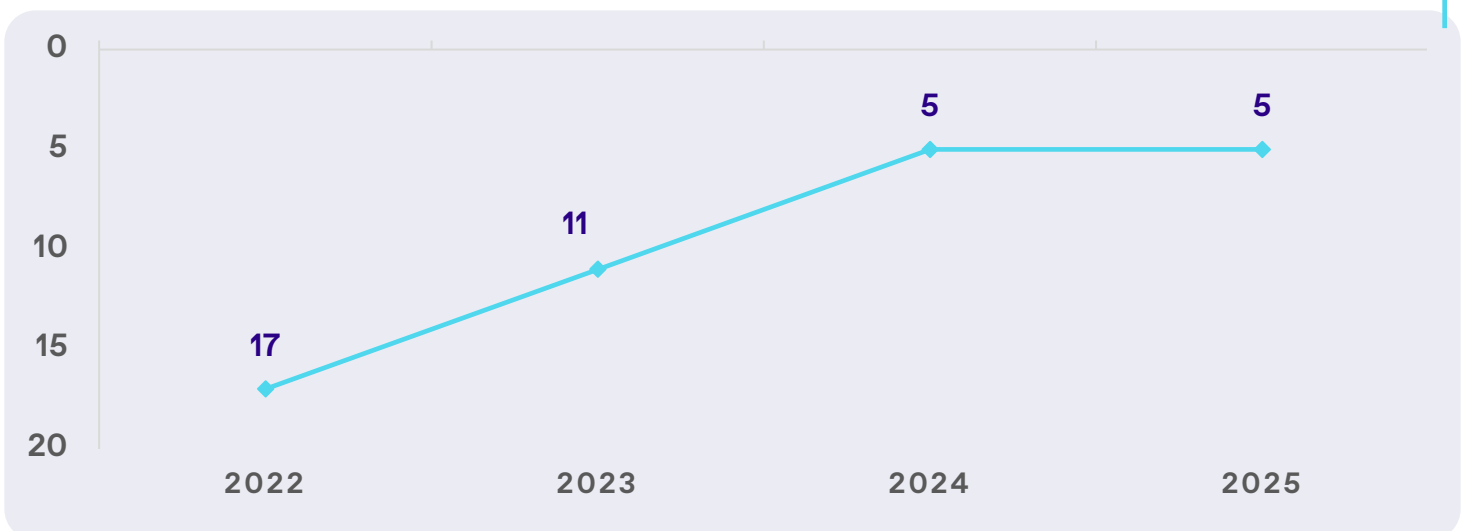


Source: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

3.3 Ranking in the Entrepreneurship Policies and Culture

Saudi Arabia maintained its position in the Entrepreneurship Policies and Culture indicator, ranking **fifth globally** within the 2025 Global Innovation Index, unchanged from 2024.

Figure 3-3



Source: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

04

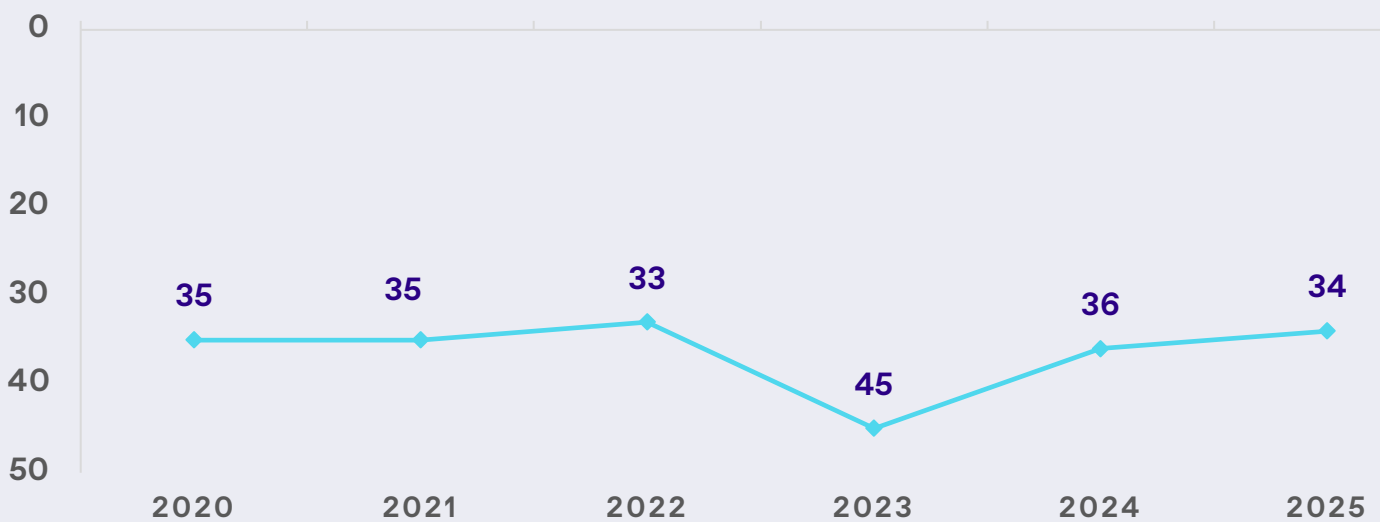
Innovation Bridges

Innovation Bridges

4.1 Ranking in University–Industry R&D Collaboration

According to Global Innovation Index Report 2025, it measures how effectively academic institutions and industry collaborate in R&D, reflecting a country's ability to turn research into practical applications. Saudi Arabia ranked 34th out of 139 countries, advancing two positions from the previous year.

Figure 4-1

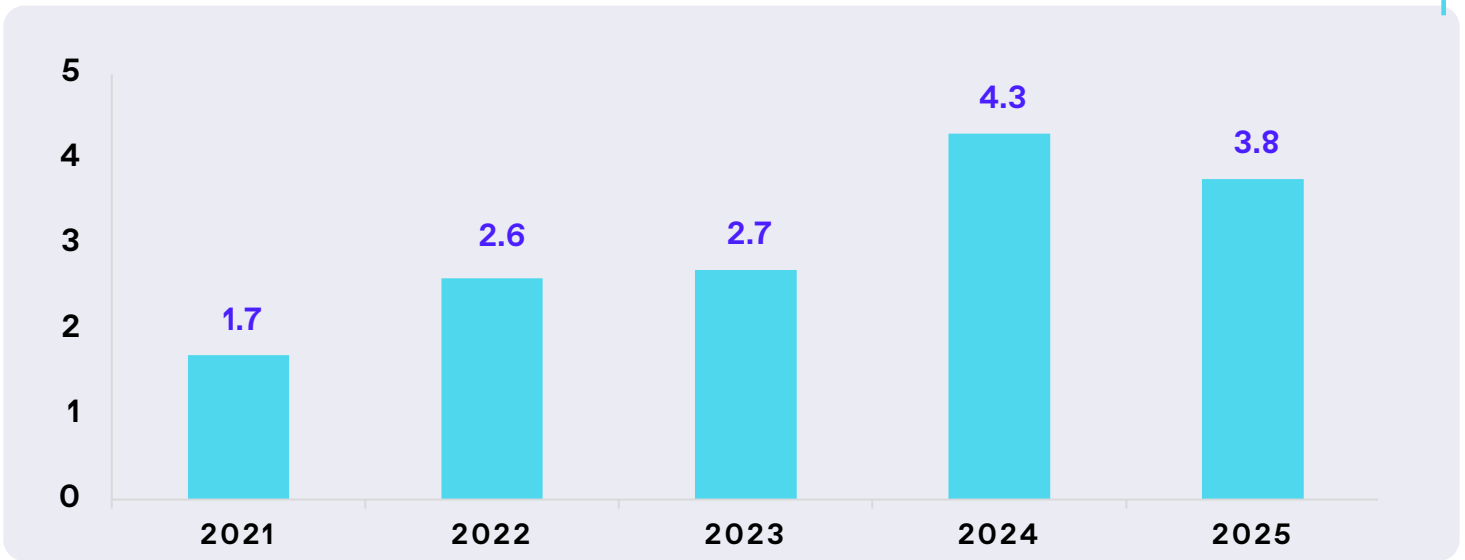


Innovation Bridges

4.2 Intellectual Property and Patents

i | Registered and Granted Patents (in thousands)

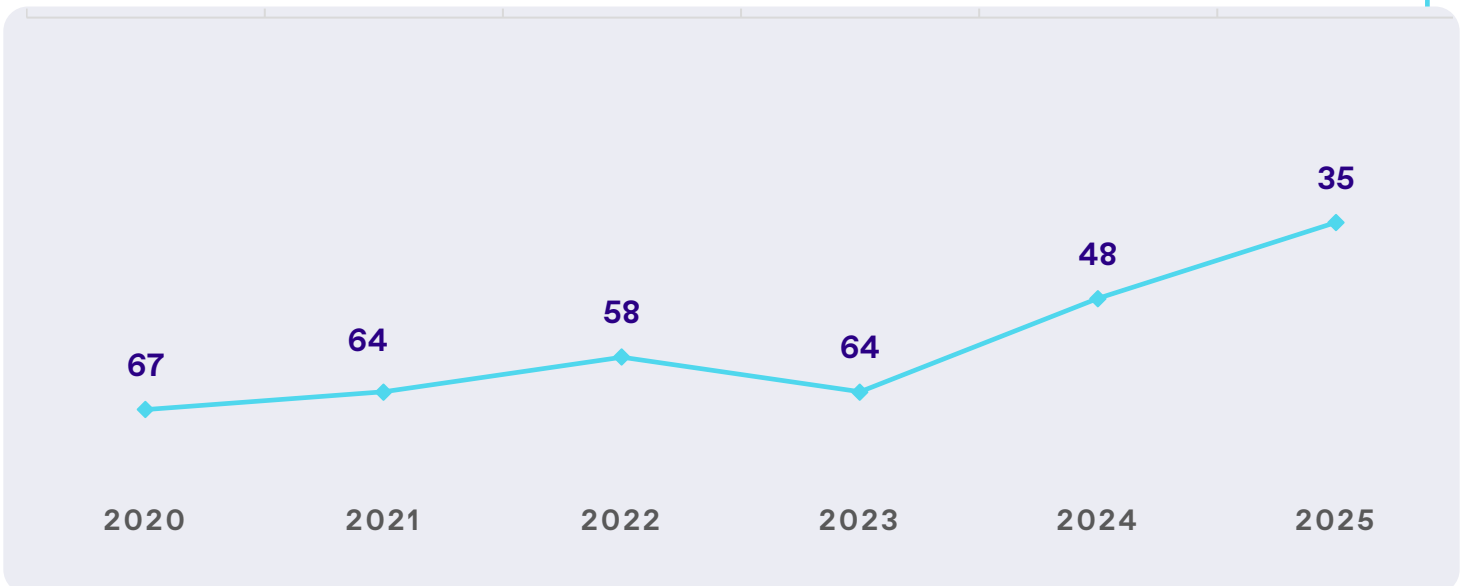
Figure 4-2-1



Source: Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP)

ii | Ranking in the Patents by Origin/bn PPP\$ GDP

Figure 4-2-2



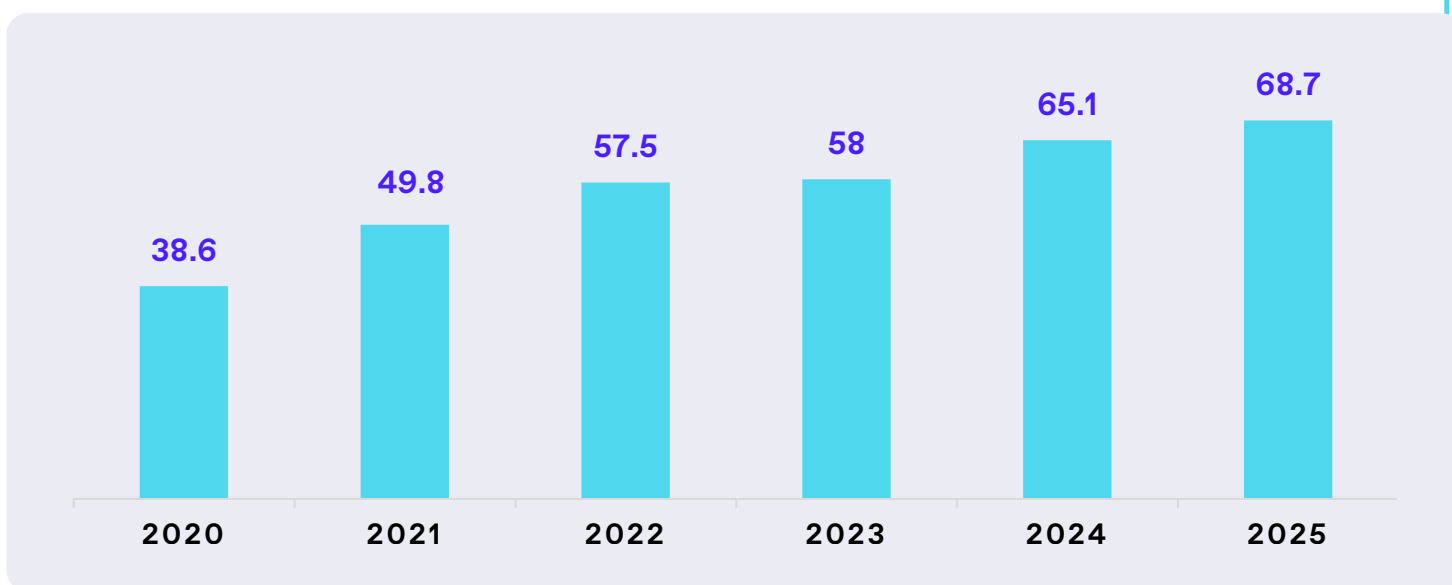
Source: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Innovation Bridges

4.3 Scientific and Technical Publications

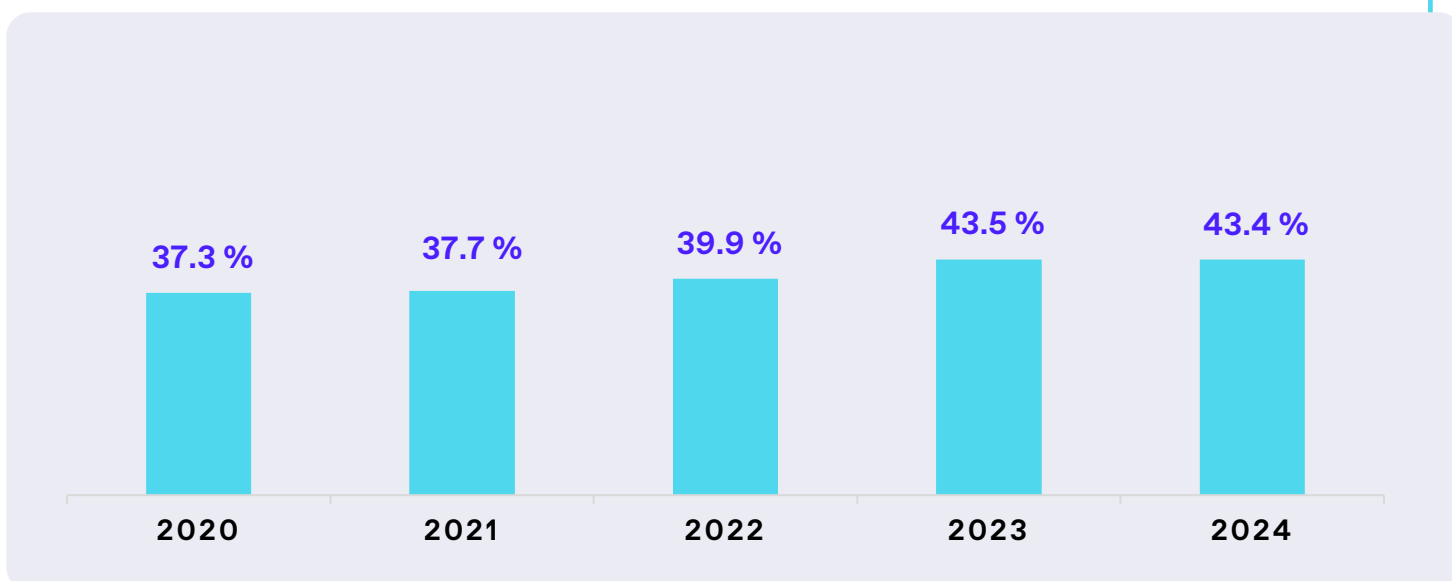
i | Total Scientific and Technical Publications (in thousands)

Figure 4-3-1



ii | Percentage of Scientific Publications in Q1-Ranked Journals

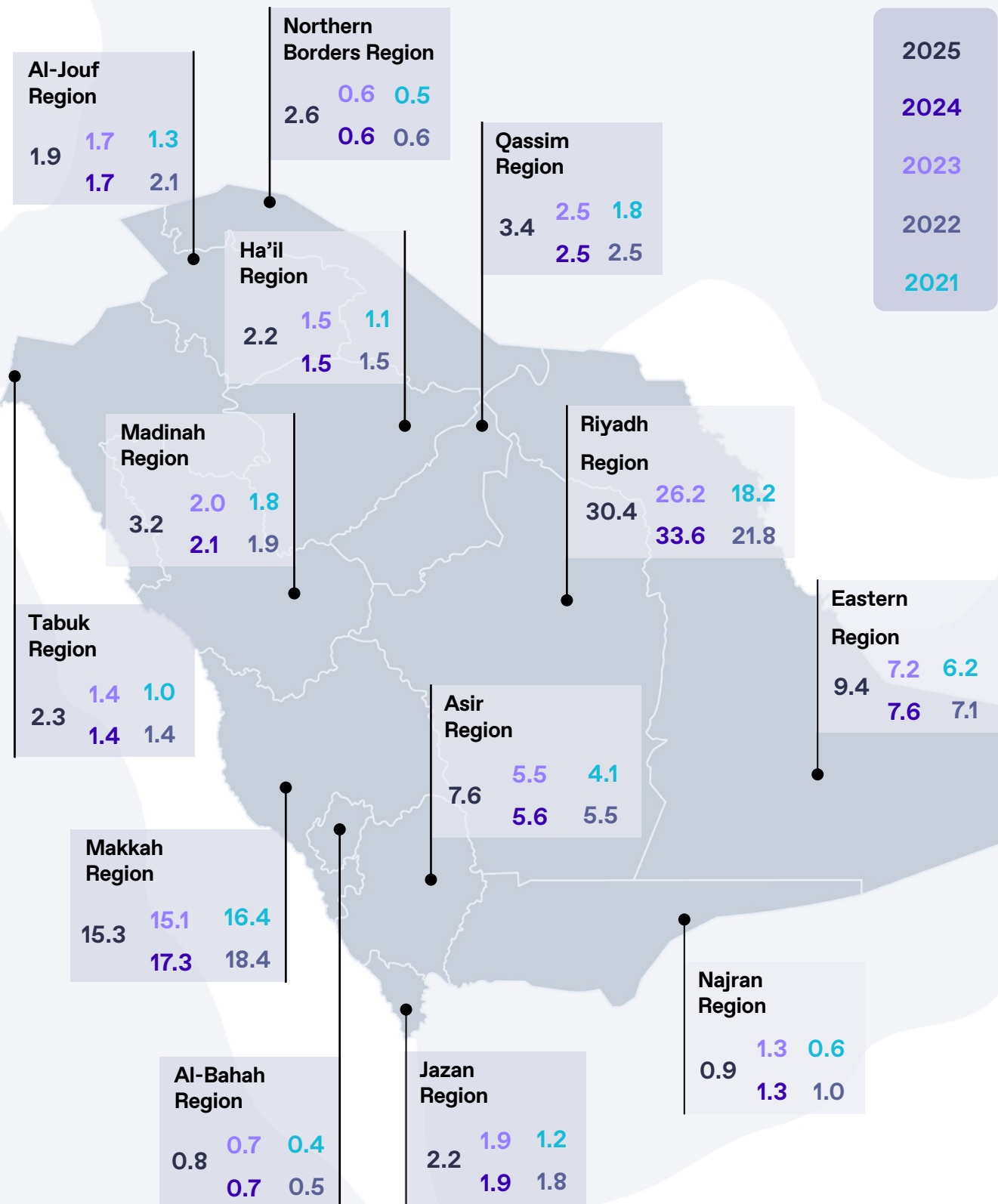
Figure 4-3-2



Innovation Bridges

iii | Distribution of Scientific and Technical Articles (K) by Administrative Region

Figure 4-3-3 |



05

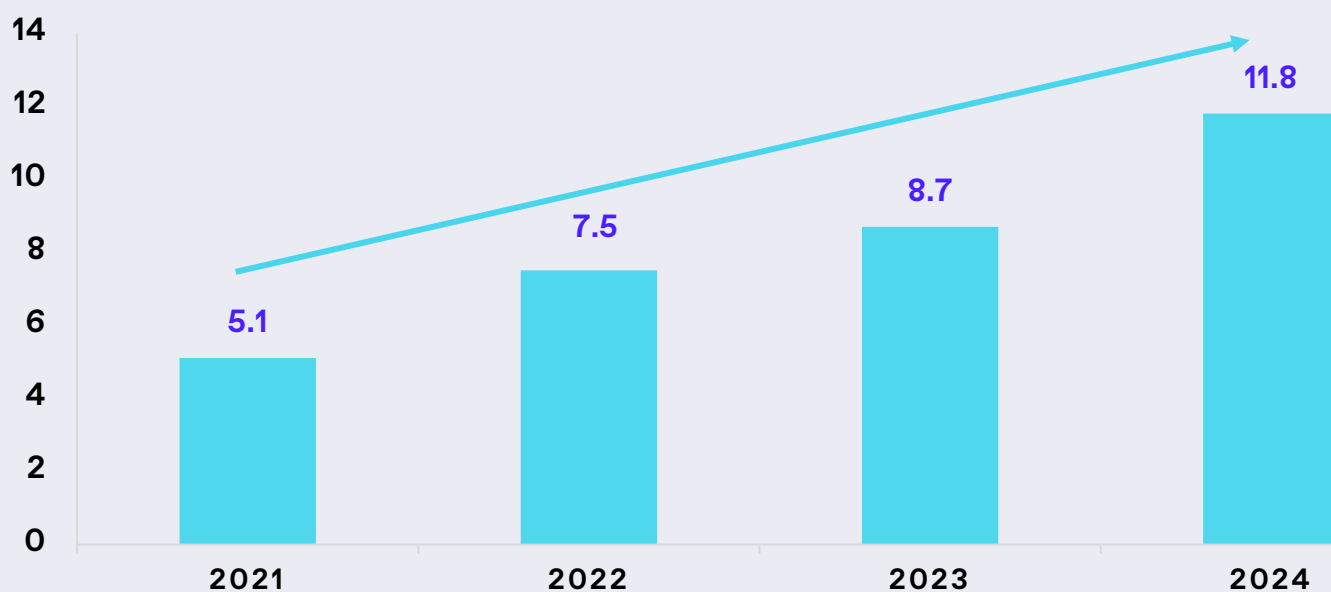
Innovation Champions

Innovation Champions

5.1 Business Enterprise Expenditure on R&D (BERD) in Billion

The private sector recorded **higher growth in R&D expenditure** in 2024.

Figure 5-1



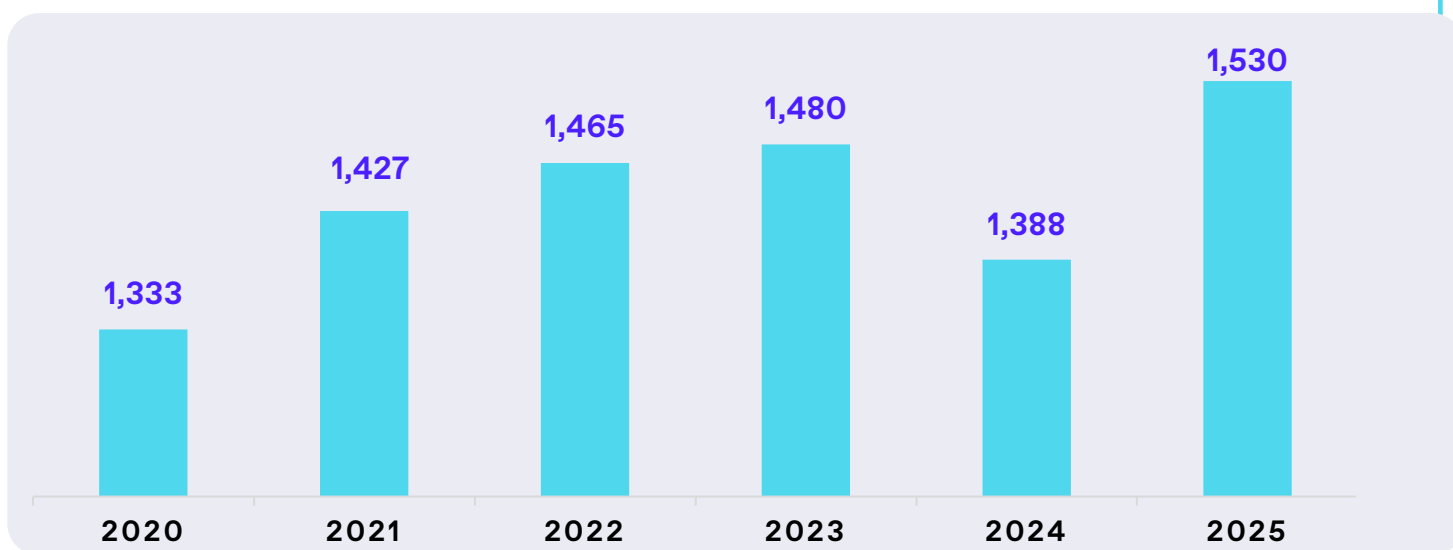
Innovation Champions

5.2 Startups and Venture Capital

i | Number of Funded Start-ups

The number of startup companies that received investment funding, based on data from the MAGNiTT database.

Figure 5-2-1



ii | Venture Capital Investment (in billion) ١٤

In 2025, venture capital investment in Saudi Arabia reached approximately SAR 6.5 billion, accounting for over 45% of total funding in the Middle East and North Africa region. It shows a significant increase of approximately 145% compared to the previous year, as the Kingdom maintained its position as the region's largest venture capital market for the third consecutive year.

Figure 5-2-2



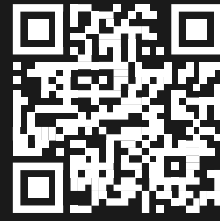
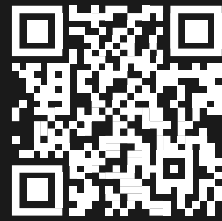
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