

SATIC Saudi-South Africa Playbook

Monthly Edition

Supporting the Saudi Digital Transformation & Industry Mission to South Africa.



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From the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this issue of the SATIC Playbook, your window into the shifting tides of global trade and investment, with a spotlight on Africa and Saudi Arabia. As we count down to the Saudi–South Africa Trade & Investment Mission, we are reminded that we are not merely participating in a moment; we are helping to shape a movement.

This month, we explore a theme that defines the era we're entering: Emerging Partnerships and a New Global Order. The post-pandemic world is witnessing a recalibration of alliances. Economic gravity is shifting steadily away from the traditional West, as new actors from the Gulf to the Global South emerge as anchors of capital, innovation, and opportunity.

Kelly Sibisibi

Editor-in-Chief





TORI ABIOLA

At SATIC, we believe that transformative partnerships don't just happen. They are built through trust, access, and shared vision. The conversations, insights, and connections reflected in this Playbook are part of a broader effort to position Africa and Saudi Arabia not just as trading partners but as co-architects of a more balanced global economy.



CAROLINA TENZER

As the publishers of this platform, our goal is to curate more than information. We aim to deliver context, open doors, and drive strategic collaboration. With each edition, we bring together the ideas, opportunities, and people shaping tomorrow's trade and investment map. We're glad you're on this journey with us.

Publishers' Note

Spotlight Feature

Saudi–Africa Trade Dynamics From Transaction to Transformation

Latest Developments

In the first quarter of 2025 alone, trade between Saudi Arabia and Africa has reached unprecedented levels, with bilateral trade volume estimated to exceed \$13.4 billion- a 19% increase year-on-year. Several key announcements underscore the momentum:

\$800 million to develop digital infrastructure across Southern and East Africa

01

02

A Saudi logistics consortium announced a \$1.2 billion investment in upgrading key port and railway corridors from East to West Africa.

Saudi real estate developers have entered joint ventures in Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya to co-develop mixed-use urban corridors

03

Trade Expansion Essentials

Doing Business in Saudi Arabia for South African Entities

Saudi Arabia is rapidly transforming into a global business hub. With its Vision 2030 reforms, investors enjoy 100% foreign ownership, zero personal income tax, and streamlined approvals through digital platforms. But ease doesn't mean simplicity. Knowing how to navigate the landscape smartly can save you months.

How to Register a Business in Saudi Arabia

To start a foreign-owned business in the Kingdom, you'll typically follow these steps:

- Apply for Investment License via MISA. Select your business activity and upload your incorporation documents.
- Reserve a Trade Name on the MoC Portal.
- Register Your Company with the Ministry of Commerce. This gives you your Commercial Registration (CR).
- Register with ZATCA for VAT and tax setup: zatca.gov.sa
- Create a Company Profile on Qiwa (Ministry of Human Resources) and Mudad (Wage Protection).
- Open a Corporate Bank Account.
- Apply for Visas and Saudization Compliance via GOSI and Qiwa.

Most of these steps are digitized, but some bottlenecks still require finesse.

Lesser-Known Tips & Common Pitfalls

- MISA approval ≠ local clearance: Municipal zoning may still restrict your business type. Check Balady before leasing space.
- Saudization depends on office type: Shared offices might not count for employment quotas.
- Investor ID is essential for utilities, banking, and telecom. Apply early.
- Online systems don't sync: Always keep PDFs of approvals across MISA, ZATCA, Qiwa, and MoC.

Trade Expansion Essentials

Doing Business in South Africa for Saudi Entities

South Africa boasts one of Africa's most advanced financial and legal infrastructures. With robust investor protections, access to regional markets via SADC, and world-class professional services, it remains a strategic entry point into the continent.

How to Register a Business in South Africa

Setting up is mostly online, though procedural depth requires precision:

- Register your company with CIPC. You'll receive a registration number and a digital certificate.
- Open a Corporate Bank Account.
- Register with SARS for tax, VAT, and PAYE at sars.gov.za.
- Apply for B-BBEE certification (highly recommended for public and corporate sector access).
- Register with the UIF and the Department of Labour.
- Secure municipal zoning approval if operating from a fixed site.

Smart Tips & Pitfalls to Watch

- Exact name matching matters: Any variation across CIPC, SARS, or bank docs delays compliance.
- B-BBEE is strategic, not cosmetic: Align early with a credible Black partner or advisor to unlock major contracts.
- Zoning affects VAT activation: A mismatch between SIC code and land use can block operations.
- Union engagement is expected in some sectors: Even with fewer than 10 staff, early outreach helps avoid disruptions.

“Strategic partnerships begin with solid foundations—lay yours with the right local compliance.”

Partner Feature of the Month: DLA Piper

DLA Piper is a global legal powerhouse recognized for delivering sophisticated corporate and commercial legal services across key international markets. With a dedicated team of experts, the firm provides strategic counsel that enables businesses to navigate complex regulatory environments and capitalize on cross-border investment opportunities.

In South Africa, DLA Piper's Johannesburg office stands at the forefront of corporate law, guiding some of the most significant transactions shaping the country's business landscape. Their expertise and local knowledge have made them a trusted partner for investors seeking to deepen ties between South Africa and global markets, including Saudi Arabia.

A prime example is their recent advisory role in the ZAR 23 billion cash offer for Barloworld, a leading South African industrial processing, distribution, and services company. The transaction, backed by a consortium of investors with financial partner RMB, reflects growing international confidence in South Africa's economic potential and marks a transformative moment for Barloworld's future.



EXPLORING MARKET CONNECTIONS & GROWTH
POTENTIAL

Market Linkages & Opportunities

Saudi Arabia is advancing digital platforms and national innovation initiatives, while South Africa is enhancing infrastructure and expanding access through tech-driven solutions.

This month, SATIC connects innovators and decision-makers from both countries to explore partnerships that drive modernization and growth. Join our upcoming trade missions and investor roundtables to unlock new opportunities and shape the future of Saudi-South Africa collaboration.

Numbers that Matter ↗

Approximately R7.3 billion, up from R6.6 billion in 2022. Key exports included agricultural products, motor vehicles, and basic chemicals.

Saudi Investment in South Africa is estimated at \$1.62 billion, making Saudi Arabia the largest investor in South Africa's renewable energy sector.

\$5 Billion Investment Agreements: In April 2025, Saudi Arabia and South Africa signed agreements worth \$5 billion focusing on energy, logistics, and infrastructure sectors.

The volume and value of joint Saudi–South African projects have expanded significantly, with over \$2 billion currently in advanced planning.

Voices & Vision: A Conversation with Mr. George Sebulela

1. As Executive Chairman of the African United Business Confederation (AUBC), how do you view Saudi Arabia's growing interest in Africa, and what makes this an important moment for South African businesses?

Saudi Arabia's growing engagement with Africa marks a strategic pivot in global trade flows. For South African exporters and importers, this opens into a high-potential market that values long-term trade relationships and quality products. From agriculture and processed goods to industrial machinery and services, South African businesses can diversify away from over-reliance on Western markets and build a more balanced export profile. This is an inflection point for our trade competitiveness.

2. What role do you see business chambers like AUBC playing in enabling deeper private sector linkages between Africa and the Gulf region, particularly through platforms like SATIC?

We see ourselves as catalysts for commercial diplomacy. Through platforms like SATIC, we're building structured corridors that reduce friction in cross-border trade, be it through market intelligence, facilitating export-readiness, or navigating customs and compliance frameworks. SAUBC works to identify opportunities, build trust between trading partners, and ensure our members can access and scale in Gulf markets without unnecessary bottlenecks.

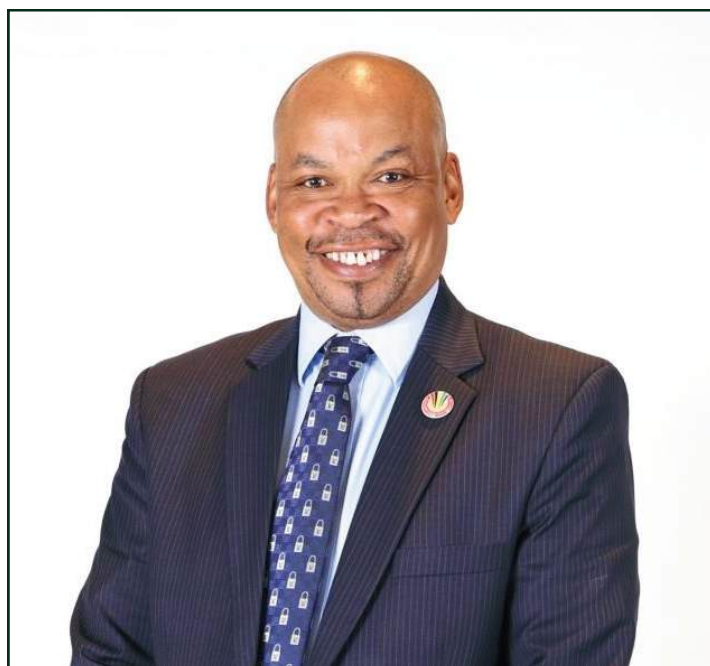
3. Given South Africa's industrial strengths and Saudi Arabia's diversification drive, where do you see the most immediate opportunities for co-export and import alignment?

Food security is an immediate area of alignment. Saudi Arabia imports a large share of its agricultural and processed food products, and South Africa is well-positioned to supply these with quality and consistency.

On the other hand, Saudi exports in petrochemicals, plastics, and fertilisers offer key input materials for South African industries. There is also room to grow in automotive parts, medical equipment, and halal-certified products, which can anchor bilateral supply chains.

4. In your view, what does a trade-ready African business look like in today's global landscape, and how should leaders be preparing for stronger Gulf-Africa trade integration?

A trade-ready business understands regional demand patterns, adheres to international standards, and is nimble with logistics. Leaders need to think beyond traditional routes; embracing digital trade platforms, leveraging trade finance instruments, and developing an understanding of Gulf regulatory ecosystems. Most importantly, they must be proactive in building networks through trade missions, bilateral councils, and platforms like SATIC, which are fast becoming gateways for African products to reach the Middle East and beyond.



PRESIDENT, AFRICAN UNITED BUSINESS
CONFEDERATION (AUBC)

The Playbook Agenda

Where Conversations Become Commitments

As Gulf–Africa relations deepen, strategic summits and high-level events are setting the pace for capital flows, joint ventures, and policy dialogue. Here are the gatherings shaping the months ahead:

AFSIC – Investing in Africa (London, October 2025)

Recognised as one of the most important Africa investment events globally, this year's edition will feature a dedicated Gulf–Africa corridor track. Saudi institutional investors and Africa-based fund managers are expected to lead sessions on blended finance, logistics infrastructure, and agri-investment.

South Africa Investment Conference – Special Edition (Johannesburg, November 2025)

This post-election edition takes on greater weight, focusing on industrial expansion, renewable energy, and export-driven growth. Delegates from Saudi ministries and private sector investment arms are expected to announce new co-investment frameworks and SEZ collaborations.

Future Investment Initiative (FII) – (Riyadh, October 2025)

The Future Investment Initiative is a leading global platform convening investors, innovators, heads of state, and industry leaders to shape the future of investment and economic transformation. Taking place from October 27 to 30, 2025, in Riyadh, FII explores breakthrough technologies, sustainable growth models, and strategic partnerships driving global progress. It catalyzes bold ideas, long-term capital, and high-impact collaboration across sectors and geographies.



Join the SATIC Network

Whether you're a business leader seeking new markets, a policymaker shaping the future of trade, or an investor scanning for cross-border opportunity, membership in the SATIC network is your gateway to opportunities.

As a member, you'll gain priority access to:

- Sector-specific trade missions, including the upcoming Saudi-South Africa Digital Transformation visit
- Strategic partnership facilitation across transport, health, tech, agri-value chains and more
- Investor roundtables and pitch showcases with curated matchmaking
- Opportunities to feature your company or project in future editions of the SATIC Playbook

Join the network powering the new era of Saudi-Africa economic cooperation and more.

DELEGATION

- 1.**ADD Accounting:** ADD Accounting offers professional bookkeeping, tax preparation, payroll, and financial consulting services in Alpharetta, GA.
- 2.**Agile Consulting:** Agile Consulting provides tailored performance improvement consulting and training across MENA with a focus on agile methodologies.
- 3.**Aldawaa Medical Services Co:** Al-Dawaa Medical Services operates over 900 pharmacies in Saudi Arabia, delivering pharmaceutical retail and healthcare solutions.
- 4.**Alrawaf Contracting:** Al Rawaf Contracting specializes in sustainable infrastructure projects and construction management aligned with Saudi Vision 2030.
- 5.**Elm Company:** Elm is a leading Saudi digital transformation company serving public and private sectors with innovative tech solutions.
- 6.**Fathom For Communications and IT:** Fathom provides AI-driven no-code/low-code platforms to optimize operations and digital transformation across industries.
- 7.**Hulool Al Sahaba for IT and Communication:** Hulool Al Sahaba offers advanced cloud and healthcare IT solutions across Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and Africa.
- 8.**Medical Systems Co Ltd:** Medical Systems Co Ltd develops multilingual hospital information systems and healthcare IT solutions across multiple countries.
- 9.**Naseej for Technology:** Naseej creates digital transformation technologies focused on education and knowledge management tailored to regional needs.
- 10.**SMSA Services:** SMSA Express is a leading Saudi logistics provider offering domestic and international transport, freight, and e-commerce solutions.
- 11.**Technology Control Company:** Technology Control Company specializes in cybersecurity and digital services for critical sectors in Saudi Arabia.
- 12.**ALKOBLAN THERMOPIPE FACTORY COMPANY:** Al Koblan Thermopipe Factory manufactures high-quality thermopipes and fittings using advanced European technology.

DELEGATION

13. **Arabian Waterproofing Industries:** Arabian Waterproofing Industries produces a wide range of bituminous waterproofing and construction products regionally.
14. **Barakah Al-Sanabil for Manufacturing:** Barakah Al-Sanabil manufactures and distributes high-quality pasta and food products with a focus on innovation.
15. **Danat Al Mamlaka Snack Food Factory:** Danat Al-Mamlaka specializes in light food and confectionery, expanding across Saudi Arabia and the Gulf markets.
16. **Karam Al Nakhil Industry Company:** Karam Al Nakhil is an online retailer focused on premium Ajwa dates from Medina with secure e-commerce services.
17. **Al-kayan United:** Al Kayan United provides consultancy and project management services in real estate development, sales, and marketing.
18. **Sleeping Companion Industrial Co**
19. **Venture Hub LLC:** Venture Hub KSA supports Saudi Vision 2030 by empowering entrepreneurs and SMEs through training and development platforms.
20. **M.A. Saadeddin & Partners Co:** Saadeddin is a renowned Saudi pastry and sweets brand with a large presence in the Middle East and franchise plans internationally.
21. **Etihad Shabab Trading Company:** ESTC specializes in award-winning tahini, halva, and baked goods with tailored food solutions and deep industry expertise.
22. **Exa Ceramic:** EXA Ceramic produces high-quality ceramic and porcelain tiles with a focus on innovation and sustainable construction practices.
23. **United Visions Factory for Food Industries:** United Food Industries Corporation delivers quality food products designed to create joyful family experiences across the region.
24. **Petronajd Factory for Industry:** Petro Najd produces high-performance engine oils, representing Saudi excellence in automotive lubricants.
25. **Jazad Development and Investment Company:** JAZADCO invests strategically in aquaculture, agriculture, manufacturing, and real estate to maximize resource efficiency.
26. **ASMA METALS:** Asma Metals Industrial Company manufactures iron tubes, pipes, and coils using modern technology to meet market demand.

DELEGATION

27. **Mada Gypsum Company:** Mada Gypsum is the Gulf region's leading supplier of sustainable building materials, including plasterboards and metal framing.
28. **Zamil Trade and Services:** Zamil Group Trade & Services is a diversified Saudi trading company serving major industrial sectors with advanced logistics.
29. **COMPANY TAFFAWET LTD**
30. **AL-ITTEFAQ STEEL PRODUCTS CO:** Al-Ittefaq Steel Products produces millions of tons of steel rebar, wire rods, and billets with emphasis on quality and Saudization.
31. **Alesayi Beverage Co Ltd:** Alesayi Beverage manufactures soft drinks and energy drinks with prominent local brands and advanced production facilities.
32. **Alraed Alarabi Industry Trading and Contracting Co Ltd:** Al-Raed is a leading green lighting technology company specializing in energy-efficient LED solutions.
33. **Advance Medical Company:** Advance Medical manufactures medical-grade blood vacuum tubes certified for high quality and safety standards.
34. **Luxury Golden Dates Trading Est:** Golden Dates Company specializes in premium Saudi dates packing and manufacturing with a focus on hygiene and sustainability.
35. **STARLINKS:** Starlinks, a subsidiary of AZAQ, leverages over 60 years of investment expertise and market knowledge in the GCC region.
36. **THIQAH:** THIQAH builds collaborative, agile innovation solutions by co-creating data and engineering transformations with clients.
37. **Almoudayfer Logistics Services Co MML:** Almoudayfer is a leading Saudi logistics company with over 60 years' experience providing comprehensive services across major ports.
38. **Bader International Shipping (BIS):** Bader International Shipping offers global sea and air freight, logistics, warehousing, and customs clearance with reliability.
39. **AETC Logistics:** AETC Supply Business Trading specializes in sales and logistics for medical and pharmaceutical sectors in Saudi Arabia.
40. **Takamol Holding:** Government-owned company empowering individuals by delivering tailored services across sectors.

DELEGATION

- 41. **Proceed Healthcare Logistics:** Leading retail logistics provider in Saudi Arabia offering freight, transport, warehousing, and supply chain services.
- 42. **Sadiq Al-Nawm Industrial Company**
- 43. **Pioneering Al-Mehwar Trading Company:** Major wholesale trader of FMCG, specializing in frozen foods and beverages in Eastern Province.
- 44. **Tafawaal Company Limited**
- 45. **Al-Taqaddom Medical Company**
- 46. **Lean Business Services:** Semi-governmental company focused on digital transformation in healthcare, owned by Saudi PIF.
- 47. **Robotera:** Robotics and AI company promoting innovation and localizing the robotics industry in Saudi Arabia.
- 48. **United Entity Industrial Company:** Manufactures industrial products; part of Aljomaih Group with global partnerships.

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