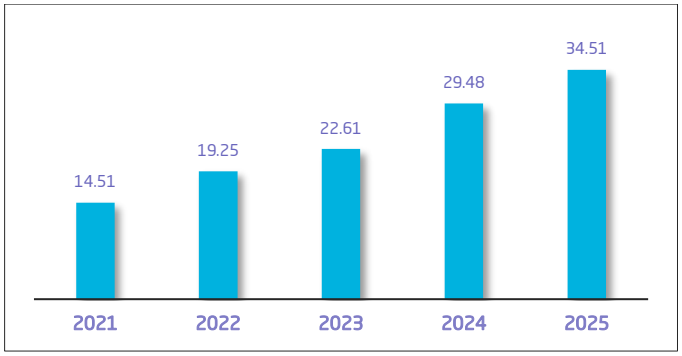
Expenditure on research and development increases by 17% in 2025

The results of research and development statistics in the Kingdom for the year 2025 indicated a 17% increase in R&D expenditure, reaching approximately 34.51 billion SAR compared to 2024. Meanwhile, the number of employees in the R&D field also grew by 20%, with the total number of employees rising to 67,691. Moreover, the number of researchers increased by 19% compared to 2024, reaching a total of 49,383 researchers in 2025. (Figure 1)

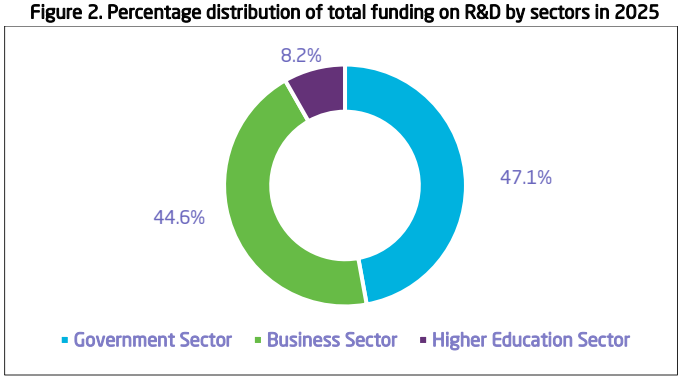
Figure 1. Expenditure on R&D in billion SAR (2021-2025)



Research and development funding by sector

The percentage distribution of R&D funding by sector indicates that funding provided by the government sector amounted to SAR 16.27 billion, accounting for 47.1% of total R&D funding and representing the largest share compared to other sectors. Meanwhile, funding provided by the business sector amounted to SAR 15.40 billion, accounting for 44.6% of total funding. The higher education sector accounted for 8.2% of total R&D funding, with a value of SAR 2.84 billion (Figure 2).

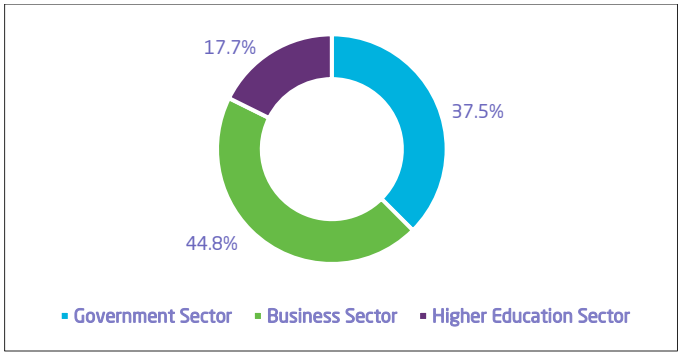
Figure 2. Percentage distribution of total funding on R&D by sectors in 2025



Research and development expenditure by sector

Based on the percentage distribution of expenditure on R&D between sectors, it is noted that the business sector topped all sectors in terms of expenditure, accounting for 44.8 % of total expenditure on R&D with a value of SAR 15.47 billion, followed by the government sector accounted for 37.5%, with a value of SAR 12.95 billion, and then the higher education sector accounted for 17.7% with a value of SAR 6.10 billion (Figure3).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of total expenditure on R&D by sectors in 2025



Research and development expenditure by economic activity

Mining, manufacturing, electricity, and water activities accounted for 34.8% of total R&D expenditure, followed by financial, insurance, real estate, and business services at 20%, and social and personal services at 10.5%. All other economic activities combined accounted for only 34.6% of total R&D expenditure.

Research and development expenditure by size

The Percentage distribution of expenditure in the field of R&D by size indicates that the value of expenditure in the field of research and development for large entities amounted to SAR 33.79 billion, representing 97.9% of the total expenditure on R&D, while the value of expenditure by micro, small and medium entities amounted to 2.1%, with a value of SAR 0.73 billion of the total expenditure on R&D.

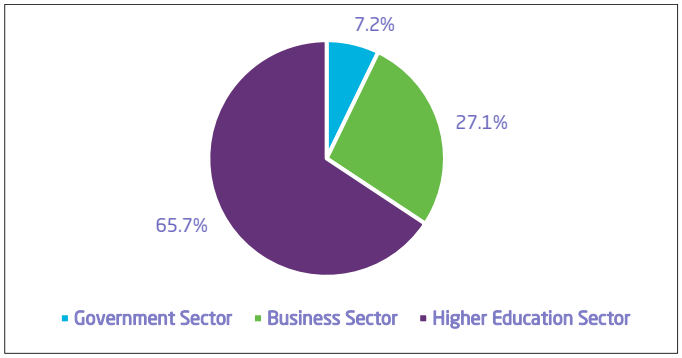
Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP

Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP reached 0.72% in 2025.

Number of employees in research and development field by sector

The percentage distribution of employees in the field of R&D at the level of different sectors indicates that the number of employees in higher education reached 44,469 thousand employees, representing 65.7% followed by the business sector, with 18,354 thousand employees, at 27.1%, then the government sector, with 4,868 thousand employees at 7.2%. (Figure 4)

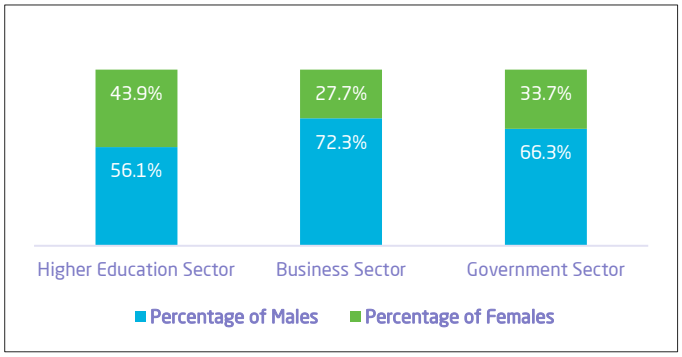
Figure 4. Percentage distribution of R&D employees by sector in 2025



Number of researchers in research and development field by sector

A detailed breakdown of the percentage distribution of researchers in R&D by sector shows that the higher education sector accounted for 79.3% of the total number of researchers, with 39,141 researchers, of whom 56.1% were male and 43.9% were female. This was followed by the business sector, which accounted for 15.8%, with 7,814 researchers, of whom 72.3% were male and 27.7% were female. The government sector accounted for 4.9%, with 2,428 researchers, of whom 66.3% were male and 33.7% were female (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of R&D researchers by sectors and gender in 2025



Methodology and quality

Research and Development Statistics (R&D) are compiled annually and concerned with the field of R&D in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, providing economic indicators about the expenditure on the field of R&D and its employees.
For more details, click here: Methodology and Quality, Table