



Saudi unemployment rate decreases to 11.7% in Q1/2021

According to estimates of the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) based on the Labor Force Survey, the unemployment rate of total working age populations (Saudis and non-Saudis 15 years and above) decreased to 6.5% in the first quarter of 2021, compared to 7.4% during the last quarter of 2020. Moreover, the unemployment rate of total Saudis (males and females 15 years and above), decreased to 11.7% in the first quarter of 2021, compared to 12.6% during the fourth quarter of 2020. Saudis' total unemployment rate is 0.1 pp lower than in the same period of the previous year, below its pre-COVID level.

Labor Force Participation rate of total population increases to 61.1%

- The unemployment rate of total male working age population in Saudi Arabia decreased in the first quarter of 2021 to 3.7% compared to 4.0% in the fourth quarter of 2020. The unemployment rate of total female working age population also decreased from 20.2% in the fourth quarter of 2020 to 16.1% in the first quarter of 2021.
- The unemployment rate of Saudi males reached 7.2% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to 7.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020, while the unemployment rate of Saudi females stood at 21.2% during the first quarter of 2021, compared to 24.4% in the previous quarter, based on the estimates of the Labor Force Survey. In the first quarter of 2021, the overall Saudi unemployment rate decreased to 11.7% compared to 12.6% in the last quarter of 2020, reaching a level below pre-pandemic.
- The results of the survey also show that the labor force participation rate of the total working age population (Saudis and non-Saudis 15 years and above) increased to 61.1% during the first quarter of 2021 compared to 61.0% in the fourth quarter of the previous year. Furthermore, the results indicated a decrease in the labor force participation rate of the total male working age population in the first quarter of 2021, to reach 79.7%, compared to 80.6% during the previous quarter. The labor force participation rate of the total female working age population increased during the first quarter of 2021 to reach 33.6%, compared to 32.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020.



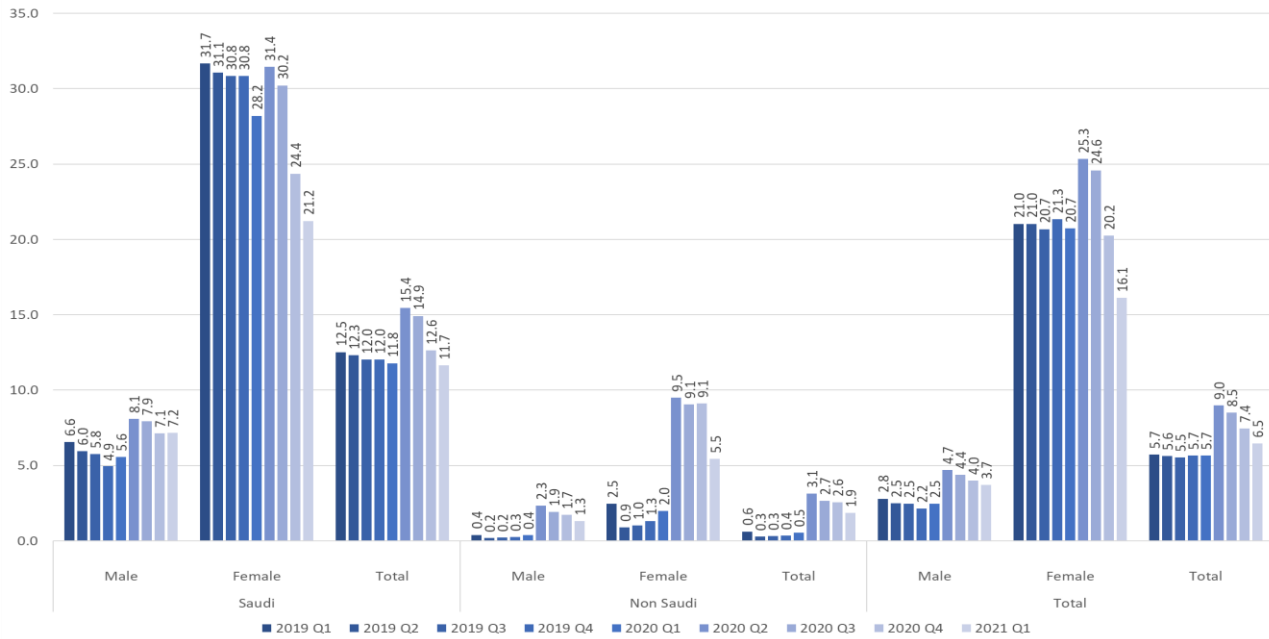
- The results also showed a decrease in the labor force participation rate of Saudis (males and females 15 years and above), to reach a level of 49.5% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to 51.2 % in the previous quarter, but remains above the pre-pandemic level.
- The labor force participation rate of Saudi males decreased by 2.4 pp to 66.2% in the first quarter of 2021, compared to 68.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020.
- The labor force participation rate among Saudi females decreased to 32.3% in the first quarter of 2021, compared to 33.2% in the previous quarter of 2020.

Limited mobility of Saudi unemployed

Since the fourth quarter of 2020, the General Authority for Statistics takes a closer look at the group of Saudi unemployed in order to inform policy makers and the general public, and to produce additional labor market indicators for Saudi Arabia. Asked, whether Saudi unemployed would also accept a job in the private sector, more than 94% answered "yes". However, many Saudi unemployed would not consider a job offer, which comes with long commuting times. 77.3% of Saudi unemployed females and 52.3% of Saudi unemployed male would only accept a commuting time of one hour or less if they were offered a job in the private sector. Also, 25.8% of Saudi unemployed females and 11.2% of Saudi unemployed male indicated that they would only accept six working hours or less per day.

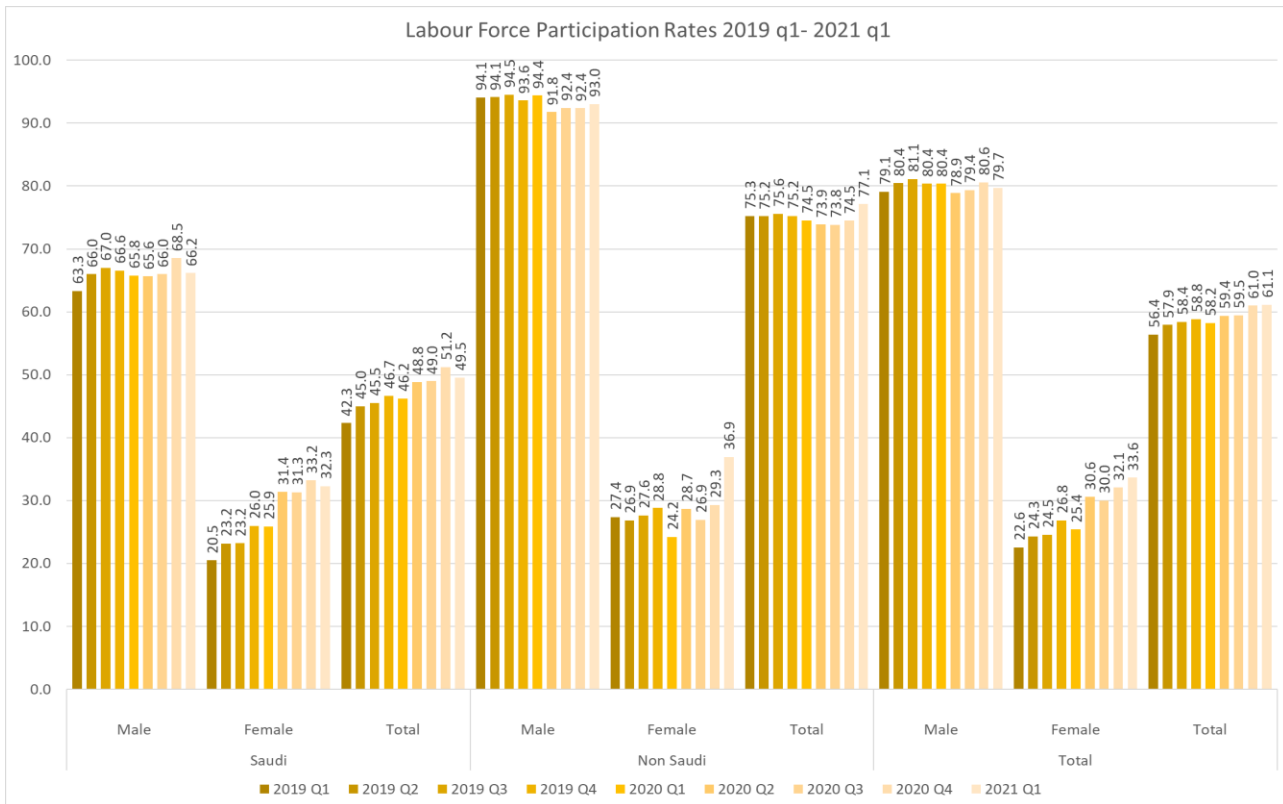


Unemployment Rates 2019 q1- 2021 q1



Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)

Labour Force Participation Rates 2019 q1- 2021 q1



Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)



Unemployment Rates									
	Saudi			Non Saudi			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2016 Q2	5.4	33.7	11.6	0.4	2.3	0.6	2.5	21.1	5.6
2016 Q3	5.7	34.5	12.1	0.6	2.9	0.8	2.6	23.6	5.7
2016 Q4	5.9	34.5	12.3	0.4	1.6	0.5	2.6	21.3	5.6
2017 Q1	7.2	33.0	12.7	0.5	2.1	0.7	3.2	20.3	5.8
2017 Q2	7.4	33.1	12.8	0.7	3.3	0.9	3.3	22.9	6.0
2017 Q3	7.4	32.7	12.8	0.4	1.6	0.5	3.2	21.1	5.8
2017 Q4	7.5	31.0	12.8	0.5	2.5	0.7	3.2	21.1	6.0
2018 Q1	7.6	30.9	12.9	0.7	2.6	0.9	3.4	21.0	6.1
2018 Q2	7.6	31.1	12.9	0.5	2.5	0.7	3.3	20.0	6.0
2018 Q3	7.5	30.9	12.8	0.6	3.1	0.9	3.3	19.9	6.0
2018 Q4	6.6	32.5	12.7	0.6	4.4	1.0	2.9	22.6	6.0
2019 Q1	6.6	31.7	12.5	0.4	2.5	0.6	2.8	21.0	5.7
2019 Q2	6.0	31.1	12.3	0.2	0.9	0.3	2.5	21.0	5.6
2019 Q3	5.8	30.8	12.0	0.2	1.0	0.3	2.5	20.7	5.5
2019 Q4	4.9	30.8	12.0	0.3	1.3	0.4	2.2	21.3	5.7
2020 Q1	5.6	28.2	11.8	0.4	2.0	0.5	2.5	20.7	5.7
2020 Q2	8.1	31.4	15.4	2.3	9.5	3.1	4.7	25.3	9.0
2020 Q3	7.9	30.2	14.9	1.9	9.1	2.7	4.4	24.6	8.5
2020 Q4	7.1	24.4	12.6	1.7	9.1	2.6	4.0	20.2	7.4
2021 Q1	7.2	21.2	11.7	1.3	5.5	1.9	3.7	16.1	6.5

Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)



Labor Force Participation Rates									
	Saudi			Non Saudi			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2016 Q2	63.2	17.7	40.2	95.5	36.2	79.4	78.3	22.2	54.9
2016 Q3	64.6	19.0	42.0	93.3	22.8	73.1	79.3	20.1	55.3
2016 Q4	64.6	19.3	42.2	94.0	31.2	76.2	79.5	22.8	56.5
2017 Q1	61.9	17.4	40.3	94.1	29.2	75.6	78.0	20.9	55.1
2017 Q2	62.1	17.4	40.3	94.0	21.6	73.4	78.2	18.7	54.2
2017 Q3	62.6	17.8	40.7	93.8	24.9	74.2	78.4	19.9	54.8
2017 Q4	63.4	19.4	41.9	94.2	24.2	74.2	79.0	20.9	55.6
2018 Q1	63.5	19.5	41.9	93.6	24.5	73.9	78.8	21.0	55.5
2018 Q2	63.5	19.6	42.0	93.9	29.0	75.5	79.0	22.4	56.2
2018 Q3	63.5	19.7	42.0	93.9	29.7	75.7	79.0	22.7	56.4
2018 Q4	63.0	20.2	42.0	93.8	25.9	74.5	78.7	21.9	55.9
2019 Q1	63.3	20.5	42.3	94.1	27.4	75.3	79.1	22.6	56.4
2019 Q2	66.0	23.2	45.0	94.1	26.9	75.2	80.4	24.3	57.9
2019 Q3	67.0	23.2	45.5	94.5	27.6	75.6	81.1	24.5	58.4
2019 Q4	66.6	26.0	46.7	93.6	28.8	75.2	80.4	26.8	58.8
2020 Q1	65.8	25.9	46.2	94.4	24.2	74.5	80.4	25.4	58.2
2020 Q2	65.6	31.4	48.8	91.8	28.7	73.9	78.9	30.6	59.4
2020 Q3	66.0	31.3	49.0	92.4	26.9	73.8	79.4	30.0	59.5
2020 Q4	68.5	33.2	51.2	92.4	29.3	74.5	80.6	32.1	61.0
2021 Q1	66.2	32.3	49.5	93.0	36.9	77.1	79.7	33.6	61.1

Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)



Additional Labor Market Indicators Q1/2021			
Saudi Unemployed			
Would accept a job in the private sector			
	Male	Female	Total
yes	95.8	93.8	94.7
no	4.2	6.2	5.3
Max. accepted commuting time			
	Male	Female	Total
not outside neighborhood	11.1	16.7	14.4
max. 1h	41.2	60.6	52.5
max. 2h	13.8	10.4	11.8
more than 2h	33.8	12.3	21.3
Max. accepted working hours			
	Male	Female	Total
less than 6h	3.3	4.9	4.2
6h	7.9	20.9	15.4
8h	59.8	65.5	63.1
occasionally more than 8h	29.0	8.7	17.2

Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT)



Methodology

Labor market statistics are based on two main sources:

* **First Source:** Labor Force Survey (LFS), (General Authority for Statistics)

The Labor Force Survey is a sample household survey that is conducted by GASTAT. LFS estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to response rate variability. All face-to-face interviews have been replaced by telephone interviews since Q2/2020 to protect the health of both interviewers and respondents. Information is collected by calling an updated sample of 53,360 households over phone. The survey provides estimates of the population inside and outside the labor force. It also provides the most important indicators of the labor market, such as the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate.

- **Unemployment rate:** ratio of unemployed people to the labor force (employed and unemployed) at working-age population (15+ years)
 - **Labor Force Participation rate:** ratio of the labor force (employed and unemployed) to the working-age population (15 + years).
 - **Unemployed:** Individuals (+15 years) who were:
 1. without a job in the week preceding the interview.
 2. Seriously looking for work during the four weeks preceding the interview (and have followed at least one method to look for a job). This category also includes those who did not search for work because they were waiting to start an already agreed job or because they want to set up their own business.
 3. People who are available to work and start a job in the week preceding the interview or the next two weeks.
- In addition to applying the standards of the International Labor Organization in calculating the unemployment rate, GASTAT uses the standards of the Labor Market Policies Committee in calculating the unemployment rate by cross-validating LFS information against administrative records.

* **Second Source:** Administrative data (GOSI, MHRSD, NIC) recorded and updated by government agencies related to the labor market, as these agencies are major sources of data of employed.

Links: [All Tables](#) , [Methodology](#)