

SAUDI ARABIA

- **Saudi Arabia's technology investments pay off in coronavirus battle**

The COVID-19 outbreak in Saudi Arabia has become an unexpected catalyst for demand for mobile apps, government portals, and emerging tech like drones.

Digital services that were introduced to bolster government institutions over the last few years are proving to be effective as Saudi Arabia locks down parts of the country.



From an app that allows people to book hospital appointments from their homes, to an e-learning portal, technology is being relied on heavily by the government to provide digital services, manage healthcare operations and identify those infected with COVID-19, say experts. The Central Appointment System (Mawid) is an example of a successful digital service. The mobile app is being used to streamline individual applications for COVID-19 tests and has become central to the Kingdom's coronavirus response. The app recently started offering a symptoms self-assessment feature as the number of confirmed cases spiked.

Ref: <https://www.cio.com/article/3535801/saudi-arabias-technology-investments-pay-off-in-coronavirus-battle.html>

- **Saudi Arabia's emerging vaccine industry**

The SaudiVax initiative is a breakthrough for the Middle East, where countries have previously not developed their own vaccine industries and remain dependent on outside entities for vaccines. Since its inception in 2016, SaudiVax has been trying to strengthen the region's vaccine development and manufacturing industry and is developing a facility for vaccine development and manufacturing that will likely be fully operational in two years and be owned by King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology.



The SaudiVax team on the land where the biological manufacturing will be built, on the campus of KAUST.



The SaudiVax team training on cell culture at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

Supported by multiple government sectors, the Saudi Vax facility intends to train Saudi scientists to work in the vaccine development and manufacturing sector in the Kingdom.

Ref: <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/coronavirus/2020/06/09/Coronavirus-Saudi-Arabian-universities-collaborating-on-COVID-19-vaccine>

- **Saudi Increases Localized Medical Manufacturing Amid COVID-19 Crisis**

Concerns regarding a worldwide shortage of sanitizers, face masks, and ventilators, which are essential in the fight against COVID-19, has pushed Saudi Arabia to increase local production for these items. The recent statistics from the Saudi Food & Drug Authority showed that local factories have been producing 3.7 million face masks per week. Presently, more than 49 factories in Saudi Arabia produce more than 1.5 million liters of sanitizer. The Kingdom has also stopped exporting all medical devices when the pandemic broke out, ensuring its hospitals are equipped to handle a large number of patients.



Ref: <https://www.marketresearchsaudi.com/insight/saudi-increases-localized-medical-manufacturing-amid-covid-19-crisis>

- **WHO, Saudi Arabia join forces to fight COVID-19 nationally, regionally and globally**



On 23 March, Saudi Arabia helped airlift WHO medical equipment and supplies from WHO's logistics hub in Dubai to Aden, Yemen. The shipment, which included personal protective items for health workers, laboratory screening tests, trauma medication and other medical supplies, will be distributed to Sana'a and Aden to support readiness for COVID-19, as well as the humanitarian response to the ongoing conflict. Earlier on 9 March, Saudi Arabia delivered a shipment of medical equipment to Wuhan city in

China. In response to an urgent WHO appeal, Saudi Arabia is also donating US\$ 10 million to support all countries of the Region in their national COVID-19 response to combat the spread of the disease. An additional US\$ 10 million is in the process of being donated to provide WHO Yemen with essential equipment and supplies as part of Yemen's national readiness and response plan.

Ref: <http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-saudi-arabia-join-forces-to-fight-covid-19-nationally-regionally-and-globally.html>

- **Saudi Arabia commissions COVID-19 testing kits**

- A strategic agreement enabling the testing of 9 million people for COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been signed with a Chinese company. The agreement, for a total value of SAR 995 million, was concluded with the National Unified Procurement Company "NUPCO" and the People's Republic of China, represented by BGI Group. It will supply a record 9 million COVID-19 testing kits, as well as the related equipment and supplies. In addition, 500 hundred experts, specialists and technicians will be provided to carry out these tests. This agreement includes establishing six large regional laboratories in a number of areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One mobile laboratory will have a production capacity of 10,000 tests daily.
- The contract also includes carrying out 50,000 test per day to diagnose COVID-19 cases, as well as comprehensive community testing. Also included is the analysis of the genetic mapping of a number of samples in the Kingdom and analysis of the community's immunity mapping of 1,000,000 samples.

Res: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/saudi-arabia-commissions-covid-19-testing-kits-301047830.html>