

Key takeaways from the Sixth Saudi Global Conference For Occupational Safety & Health 2024

Event post-script



The Sixth Edition of the **Saudi Global Conference for Occupational Safety & Health**, an event gathering government entities and local and international industry leaders, took place in Riyadh in May 2024.

This year's conference theme, '**Scanning the Horizon**,' highlighted Saudi Arabia's efforts in advancing occupational safety and health nationally while exploring new legislative and procedural developments.

Here are our **four main takeaways** from the conference:

1.

Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) is a strategic national-level agenda in line with Vision 2030

Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) is a strategic pillar for the region, emphasising its critical role within workplaces, across public and private sectors, and as a fundamental human right. This commitment extends beyond local boundaries, with a clear ambition to position Saudi Arabia as a strong leader in OSH, as it drives rapid growth.

Conversations surrounding OSH echo this ambition, highlighting significant progress in various fronts, including reducing recordable injuries, improving compliance, and enhancing safety profession capabilities.

In fact, over the past six years, Saudi Arabia has seen significant progress in occupational safety and health, with notable reductions in injury and fatality rates per 100,000 workers, declining from 416.1 to 287.8 and from 3.828 to 1.12, respectively. Moreover, the sector has experienced substantial growth, generating new employment opportunities and fostering increased interest.¹

¹ <https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/media-center/news/28042024>



Saudi Arabia has seen significant progress in occupational safety and health, injury and fatality rates declining from 416.1 to 287.8 and from 3.828 to 1.12, respectively (2018- 2024).*

* per 100,000 workers

To drive these efforts forward, concrete goals and targets have been set, with cross-agency collaboration fueling strategic initiatives to improve OSH performance. Engaged discussions reinforce the necessity of sharing best practices and standardising processes. It is a narrative that acknowledges the importance of learning from incidents, taking a risk-based approach and developing a strategy to proactively address Serious Injury & Fatality (SIF) occurrences.



2.

Achieving excellence in OSH at a national level requires a coordinated approach with engagement across government bodies and partnership with industry

There is a clear aspiration to integrate OSH practices seamlessly into operational frameworks and strategies. This strategic alignment underscores a commitment to standardise safety measures across all sectors, ensuring a cohesive approach towards safety implementation that supports broader national objectives. Saudi Arabia is taking steps to incentivise agencies and establishments to implement OSH requirements.

With significant growth at a national level, there is an opportunity for improvement in unifying efforts, fostering stronger partnerships between public sector entities and industrial sectors, and strengthening the role of OSH promotion in the country.



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3.

Building an OSH Culture is a priority for government leaders and industry executives

Government leaders and industry executives, through sharing their personal experiences, recognised the importance of strengthening OSH cultural maturity, to move along the maturity curve from “following the rules because I have to”, to “following the rules because I want to.”

Framing OSH culture beyond an individual company introduces a new challenge, underlining the critical role of education in improving OSH awareness and practices across the youth and incorporating safety beliefs and practices not only in academic curriculums but also in extracurricular activities. This underscores the necessity of establishing a comprehensive training programme, which is pivotal in promoting OSH. The conference showcased Saudi Arabia’s efforts to build safety professional capabilities and plans to integrate safety into the education sector to pave the way for a safer, healthier, and more sustainable future workforce. In line with these efforts, the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health recently launched 16 specialised awareness programmes in the field, achieving an estimated awareness rate of 79% among workers on occupational safety and health.²



The role of education was highlighted as critical towards improving OSH awareness and practices across the youth.

² <https://www.hrsd.gov.sa/en/media-center/news/28042024>

4.

Digitisation can drive great impact in OSH capability development and risk reduction, particularly in capital projects

The pivotal role of digitisation in driving impactful OSH capability development, especially within capital projects, emerged as a key theme. It is evident that digital solutions are readily available, scalable, and poised to transform OSH practices, particularly in the construction sector. There is a clear consensus that construction OSH efforts should pivot towards a digital-centric approach, targeting key opportunities such as hazard recognition, fatigue management, crowd management, and traffic management.

While digital transformation does include the use of digital tools that deliver operational enhancements on projects, digital transformation goes beyond mere tools. It incorporates agile environments and processes – ones that leverage data-driven decision-making and new ways of working to break down the traditional silos of the construction industry.

This comprehensive approach enhances productivity and yields significant benefits, such as improved construction site OSH and building quality, enhanced productivity, and reduced environmental impact.



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How dss⁺ can help

dss⁺ is a premier **global sustainable operations management consultancy**. Our goal is to help leading organisations **Protect, Transform** and **Sustain** what matters most – people, assets, communities, business performance, competitiveness, and sustainability – for future generations, at an organisational, national or global level. We are proud of the impact we have made in driving our purpose to '**save lives and create a more sustainable future**'.

- At dss⁺, we help clients **improve business and safety performance** by protecting and creating value through a **risk-based approach** driven by cultural transformation, capability development and digital enablement.
- Through the **integration of processes & standards, governance, leadership & culture, capabilities, and technology**, we serve as a partner and advisor on the safety performance & culture improvement journey.
- Our **risk-based approach** helps provide visibility on top risks across industries and support a prioritised approach towards risk reduction.

Operating in the GCC for over two decades, dss⁺ supports the strategic enhancement of the OSH ecosystem through evolving regulatory frameworks, stakeholder collaboration, organisational excellence, assurance programmes, capability development, and technology. We serve as a **trusted strategic advisor and partner** to help navigate the complexities and intricacies of an **effective OSH programme** and its implementation across industries.

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dss⁺ is a leading provider of sustainable operations consulting services with a purpose of saving lives and creating a sustainable future. dss⁺ enables companies to build organisational and human capabilities, manage risk, improve operations, achieve sustainability goals and operate more responsibly.

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