



Arab Observatory for Policy Evaluation Institutionalization

COUNTRY BRIEF · 2025



Saudi Arabia

Evaluation anchored mainly in the executive

14.6%

Composite

23.0%

Political

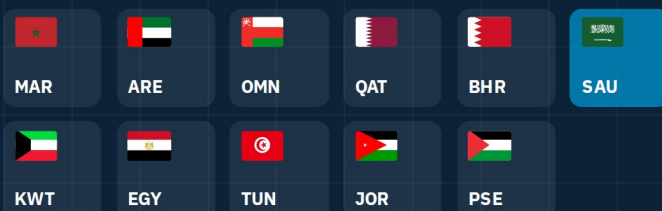
12.5%

Profession

0.0%

Social

Dr Anis Ben Brik



2025

At a glance

14.6% composite index, per cent of the theoretical maximum	23.0% political system	12.5% profession system
0.0% social system	4 indicators above zero, of 16	Emerging group

Saudi Arabia (Gulf) scores 14.6%, below the regional mean, in the Emerging group. Its strongest sub-dimension is 1B Evaluation use (33.0%). It scores above zero on 4 of 16 indicators.

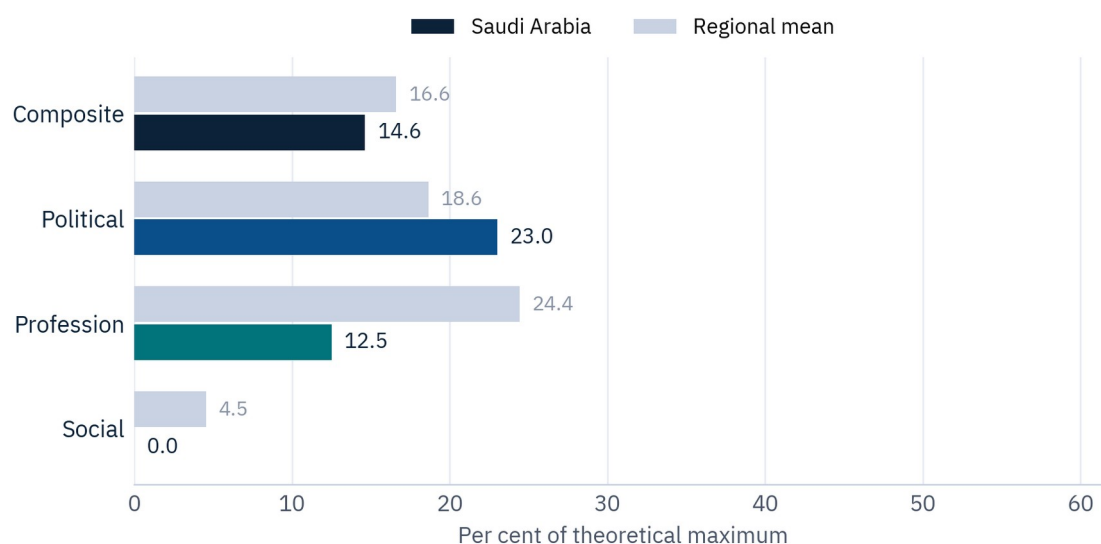
Key messages

- The political system scores 23.0% (above the regional mean of 18.6%), the profession system 12.5% (below 24.4%) and the social system 0.0% (below 4.5%).
- The largest gap between systems is Political–Social (23.0 points, Political ahead). The political system accounts for 65% of the total of the state, the profession system 35% and the social system 0%.
- Saudi Arabia scores zero on 12 of 16 indicators, including national evaluation laws and strategies, national decrees on evaluation, evaluation role of the supreme audit institution and parliamentary use of evaluation.
- In the exploratory clustering, Saudi Arabia belongs to group 3: organised executive systems with developing professional capacity.

The three systems

The chart compares the three systems and the composite index of Saudi Arabia with the regional means. It shows where institutionalisation is concentrated and where it falls short of the region.

Figure 1. The three systems



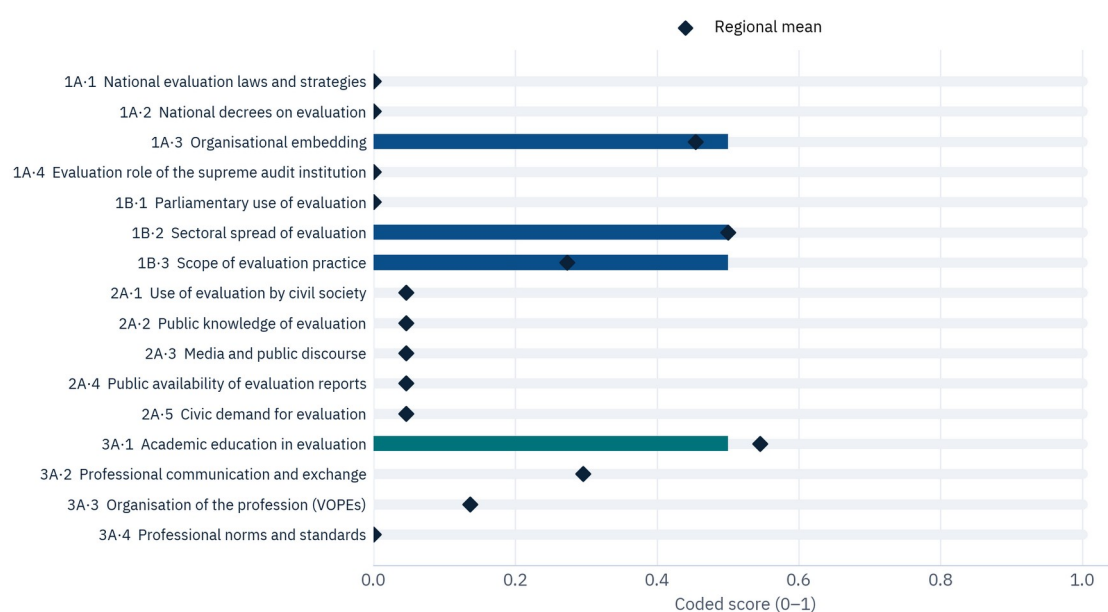
Source: Ben Brik (2025), *Index of Evaluation Institutionalization in the Arab Region*, first edition. Framework: Evaluation GLOBE (Stockmann et al., 2020), used with permission.

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The sixteen indicators

Each bar is the coded score of Saudi Arabia on one indicator, from 0 to 1; the diamond is the regional mean. The chart identifies the indicators on which the state is absent and those on which it leads.

Figure 2. The sixteen indicators



Source: Ben Brik (2025), *Index of Evaluation Institutionalization in the Arab Region*, first edition. Framework: Evaluation GLOBE (Stockmann et al., 2020), used with permission.

Saudi Arabia scores zero on 12 of 16 indicators, including national evaluation laws and strategies, national decrees on evaluation, evaluation role of the supreme audit institution and parliamentary use of evaluation.

Table 1. The sixteen indicators

Indicator	Score	Regional mean	States above zero
1A•1 National evaluation laws and strategies	0.00	0.00	0
1A•2 National decrees on evaluation	0.00	0.00	0
1A•3 Organisational embedding	0.50	0.45	9
1A•4 Evaluation role of the supreme audit institution	0.00	0.00	0
1B•1 Parliamentary use of evaluation	0.00	0.00	0
1B•2 Sectoral spread of evaluation	0.50	0.50	11
1B•3 Scope of evaluation practice	0.50	0.27	6
2A•1 Use of evaluation by civil society	0.00	0.05	2
2A•2 Public knowledge of evaluation	0.00	0.05	2
2A•3 Media and public discourse	0.00	0.05	2
2A•4 Public availability of evaluation reports	0.00	0.05	2
2A•5 Civic demand for evaluation	0.00	0.05	2
3A•1 Academic education in evaluation	0.50	0.55	8
3A•2 Professional communication and exchange	0.00	0.30	7
3A•3 Organisation of the profession (VOPEs)	0.00	0.14	3
3A•4 Professional norms and standards	0.00	0.00	0

Note: coded scores from 0 to 1.

Architecture and gaps

The largest gap between systems is Political–Social (23.0 points, Political ahead). The political system accounts for 65% of the total of the state, the profession system 35% and the social system 0%.

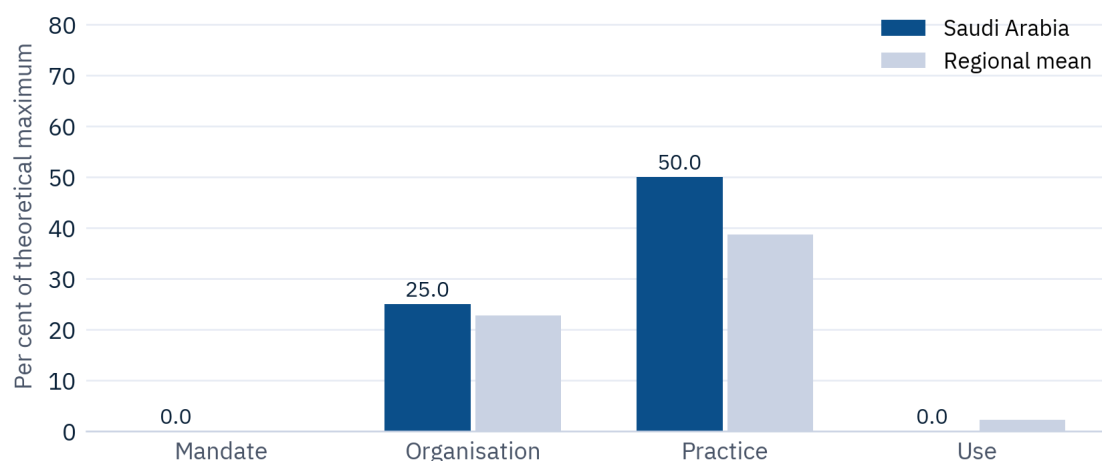
Supply indicators average 21.2% and demand indicators 0.0%; horizontal accountability scores 0.0%.

In the exploratory clustering, Saudi Arabia belongs to group 3: organised executive systems with developing professional capacity.

The administrative capacity pathway

The pathway compares Saudi Arabia with the regional mean at each stage from mandate to use. A stage that scores below the previous one marks a break in the sequence.

Figure 3. The administrative capacity pathway



Source: Ben Brik (2025), *Index of Evaluation Institutionalization in the Arab Region*, first edition. Framework: Evaluation GLOBE (Stockmann et al., 2020), used with permission.

Its pathway scores are 0.0% for mandate, 25.0% for organisation, 50.0% for practice and 0.0% for use. Organisational embedding exceeds formal anchoring: evaluation units exist without binding rules. Routine practice exceeds governance use: findings do not enter audit, parliamentary or civic arenas.

Implications for evaluation policy

- **Legal anchoring.** Adopt a law, decree or strategy that sets evaluation obligations and the use of findings.
- **External oversight.** Mandate the supreme audit institution to review evaluation quality and use.
- **Parliamentary use.** Require evaluation evidence in budget and legislative review.
- **Societal demand.** Publish evaluation reports and open them to civil society and media.
- **Professional organisation.** Support a national evaluation association.
- **Academic education.** Develop degree and certificate programmes in evaluation.

Discussion

The profile of Saudi Arabia describes institutional arrangements coded from documentary evidence; it does not measure the quality of evaluations or their effects on policy. Three readings are consistent with it: a supply reading, in which institutionalisation follows the creation of units and training; a demand reading, in which it follows obligations and oversight; and a diffusion reading, in which it follows international programmes and donor requirements. The coding cannot separate them.

For Saudi Arabia, the questions that follow are whether evaluation units are backed by rules that oblige their use, whether audit institutions and parliament will review evaluation evidence, and whether reports will be published. The next edition of the index will show whether its configuration changes.

Recommendations

Table 2. Recommendations

Priority	Action	Responsible actors	Intended outcome
Legal anchoring	Adopt a law, decree or strategy that sets evaluation obligations and the use of findings	Centre of government; legislature	A formal mandate for evaluation
External oversight	Mandate the supreme audit institution to review evaluation quality and use	Supreme audit institution	Evaluation evidence in external audit
Parliamentary use	Require evaluation evidence in budget and legislative review	Parliament; ministry of finance	Findings used in legislative scrutiny
Societal demand	Publish evaluation reports and open them to civil society and media	Ministries; evaluation units; civil society	Public availability and use of reports
Professional organisation	Support a national evaluation association	Evaluators; universities	An organised profession
Academic education	Develop degree and certificate programmes in evaluation	Universities; ministry of higher education	A trained evaluation workforce

Data and sources

Scores come from the first edition of the Index of Evaluation Institutionalization in the Arab Region (Ben Brik, 2025), coded from documentary evidence on sixteen indicators of the Evaluation GLOBE framework (Stockmann et al., 2020), used with permission. Scores describe institutional arrangements, not the performance of governments.



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Notes and sources

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